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CHAUCER'S
CANTERBURY TALES

EDITED
WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY
ALFRED W. POLLARD

VOL. I

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK

1894

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INTRODUCTION

I PROPOSE to devote this brief introduction chiefly to the discussion of one or two aspects of Chaucer's development as a literary artist. In my little *Primer of Chaucer*, I have endeavoured to summarise the dry facts and dates as to Chaucer's life and the order and sources of his poems; but these beggarly elements of Chaucer-criticism, as they may fairly be called, even by those who best know their value as a foundation on which to build, need not always be kept in the forefront, and it is not necessary to repeat them here. Chaucer was born about 1340, of middle-class parents; was page in the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence; served a campaign in France; was one of the king's valets, was employed on commercial and diplomatic missions to France and Italy, held posts in the customs, and was clerk of the king's works at Westminster and Windsor; belonged to the party of John of Gaunt, and shared to some extent his patron's fortunes—there, in seventy words, is the poet's life as far as it helps us to understand his works, and though we know by heart every

payment which he received *per manus suas* from the king's Exchequer, we shall not be greatly the wiser. The old lies about Chaucer's life and the poems absurdly attributed to him have been nailed to the counter again and again, and it ought not to be necessary to serve up the same stale dish every time we reprint his works.

Before, however, I can embark on the pleasant little task which I propose for myself, I must say a few words as to the origin of the present edition of the *Canterbury Tales* and the features which it embraces.

In 1888 Dr. Furnivall proposed to me that I should collaborate with him in the edition of Chaucer which he had for many years promised to bring out for Messrs. Macmillan. A beginning was made, but the giant in the partnership had been used for a quarter of a century to doing, for nothing, all the hard work for other people, and could not spare from his pioneering the time necessary to enter into the fruit of his own Chaucer labours. Thus the partner who was not a giant was left to go on pretty much by himself. When I had made some progress, Professor Skeat informed us that the notes which he had been for years accumulating encouraged him to undertake an edition on a large scale, and I gladly abandoned in favour of an editor of so much greater width of reading the Library Edition which had been arranged for in the original agreement of Dr. Furnivall and myself with Messrs. Macmillan. I

thought, however, that the work which I had done might fairly be used for an edition on a less extensive plan and intended for a less stalwart class of readers, and of this the present issue of the *Canterbury Tales* is an instalment.

As is well known, the early editions of Chaucer from Caxton to Urry's are full of errors, so serious as to have completely obscured the poet's real mastery of his art—only a percentage of the lines being susceptible of scansion and the sense being frequently destroyed. From the discredit thus cast on him, Chaucer was at last rescued by the edition of the *Canterbury Tales* brought out by Thomas Tyrwhitt, in 1775. Though with only second-rate manuscripts to work from, Tyrwhitt, by virtue of his true literary feeling, produced a text which went far towards vindicating Chaucer's reputation as a master of poetry, while the majority of his annotations are so excellent that they form the basis of all subsequent work. In 1847 came Wright's edition of the *Tales* based on the Harleian MS. 7334, a manuscript of really capital importance, though the value which was at first claimed for it is now seen to have been excessive. In 1868, Dr. Furnivall, the founder of the Chaucer Society, set to work on the great Six-Text Edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, the helpfulness of which can never be over-estimated, though it may be easy, after the event, to criticise the choice of some of the six manuscripts.

The great discovery of the Six-Text Edition was the

surpassing value of the Ellesmere Manuscript (called after its owner, the Earl of Ellesmere). By its help an immense step forward was taken in restoring Chaucer's true text, for here at last was the work of a careful, scholarly scribe, using a reasonable and fairly uniform spelling, with readings always straightforward and intelligible. If it were not for the existence of those pests of literature, stereotyped plates, it is safe to say that the Ellesmere text would be the basis of all future reprints of the *Canterbury Tales*, but every copyist has his own failings, and a simple reprint of the Ellesmere text, such as is practically given in the Riverside Chaucer, edited by Mr. Gillman, is not entirely satisfactory. The text of the present edition is the result of the careful collation of the Six Texts and Harleian MS. 7334, all variations from the Ellesmere Manuscript being stated in the footnotes. I have also recorded a large number of alternative readings, even where I have adopted that of the Ellesmere. Substantially, no doubt, we now have the *Canterbury Tales* as Chaucer wrote them, but there are some scores of lines in which it is impossible to choose between the different readings of good manuscripts ; and above all, in point of metre, an editor with a preconceived theory of Chaucer's practice, by systematically choosing one class of readings in place of another, can quietly bring his text into accordance with his own notions. Was Chaucer content to leave some of his lines a little irregular, or did he smooth them out

with a *that*, a *to* or a *for to*, which are not needed for the grammatical construction? Did he, as the Ellesmere text suggests, affect the old infinitival ending in *en*, even when it roughens the verse with an extra syllable, or is this merely a piece of the scribe's pedantry? I do not see how we can answer such questions save out of our own sense of what is fitting, which may not coincide with Chaucer's, and for the sake of the curious in such matters I have recorded the variations. To save space I have adopted a system of abbreviations. The two most important manuscripts and the widest apart are the Ellesmere (E) and the Harleian 7334 (H). The Cambridge University MS. Gg. 4. 27 follows E very closely, and is mainly useful for correcting casual slips of the Ellesmere scribe. The Hengwrt Manuscript generally follows E, but sometimes agrees with H. The Corpus, Petworth and Lansdowne Manuscripts are of less importance, agreeing sometimes with E, sometimes with H, to which the Petworth is on the whole the closest. In my notes I have regarded E and H as mutually exclusive, and have added numerals to denote the amount of support which they receive from the other manuscripts. Thus a reading followed by the letter E denotes that the text follows the other six manuscripts and the variation is supported by the Ellesmere only. E² shows that it is supported by the Ellesmere and one other, almost certainly the Cambridge Manuscript; E³ that it is supported by Ellesmere

and two others, almost certainly Cambridge and Hengwrt. The numbers 4-6 show the additional support of one, two or three of the inferior manuscripts, Corpus, Petworth, and Lansdowne. Similarly, a variant followed by the letter H denotes that the text has the support of the Ellesmere and other five manuscripts. H² indicates the agreement of one other manuscript, probably the Petworth with H; H³, H⁴ the support of one or two more, probably Corpus and Lansdowne; H⁵ that these are again reinforced, probably by Hengwrt; H⁶ that even the Cambridge Manuscript deserts the Ellesmere. I do not claim for this system of abridged collation that it is entirely satisfactory, but it gives a rough view of the authority on either side at a glance, and makes it possible to record variants which otherwise would have to be omitted.

To those who take no interest in "various readings," I would plead that my record of them takes very little room and that the text is not disfigured by marks calling attention to them. The same apology must serve for the explanations of obsolete words given in the foot-notes. I have reduced these as much as I could by adding a glossary (partly based on Tyrwhitt's) of the commoner words so as to avoid explaining them each time they occur; but to interrupt one's enjoyment of poetry by looking up words in a glossary appears to me an intolerable penance, and I have therefore put explanations of the obsolete words in foot-notes to the pages where they first occur.

The only other point in which I have meddled ("an editor must always be meddling") is by marking with an unobtrusive dot, like that over an *i*, the final *e* where it affects the scansion of the verse, and by indicating some important differences of accent, and drawing attention to the few score of lines which begin with a foot consisting of a single syllable.¹ Some of these lines are effective, in others the stress thrown on the first syllable seems excessive and unmeaning—

Al | bismot|red with | his hab|ergeon (A. 76),
 Gýng|len in | a whist|lynge wynd | als cleere (A. 170),
 Twén|ty book|es clad | in blak | or reed (A. 294),
 Év|erich for | the wis|dom that | he kan (A. 371),

¹ The fact—which I take for granted—that I have occasionally by marking, or omitting to mark, an *e* suggested a wrong scansion, is the best justification for the plan I have adopted. Chaucer is certainly not consistent in the value he gives to his *e* final, and if it is quite possible, even after going over every line four or five times, to lose step occasionally, the casual reader need not scorn such help as patient drudgery can offer him. I should like to note here that we need not suppose that where an *e* final has a grammatical justification, but is not required by the scansion, it was therefore absolutely silent. The difference is not between absolute silence and distinct sound, but between slight sound and less slight sound. The first page of the *Canterbury Tales* at which I look (Wife of Bath's Prologue *ad in.*) gives some excellent examples—

For, lordyngés, sith I twelf yeer was of age,
 Y-thonkéd be God, that is eterne on lyve!
 Housbondés at chirché dore I have had fyve;
 For I so ofté have y-wedded bee;
 And allé were worthy men in hir degree.

Here I have dotted the *e* when slightly pronounced and accented *it* where it is less slightly sounded. The dotted ones are not needed for the scansion, but I do not believe that they are absolutely silent, and the verse to my thinking reads all the better for the free movement they impart to it.

occur to me as examples of the first class, in which the accent helps the sense :

Fór | to deellen with | no swiche | poraille (A. 247),
 In | a gowne | of falldyng to | the knee (A. 391),

of the second, where the lines, though easy enough to read, are not ideally good. But whether we like them or not there are too many of them, supported by a consensus of manuscripts, for us to deny that Chaucer so wrote them, and no sane person would endeavour to scan line 247

For tó | deelen | with no | swiché | poraille,
 or tamper with line 391 for the pleasure of reading
 In á | gowne óf | [greye] falldyng to | the knee.

It only remains for me to note that I have allowed (except in the case of a few obvious slips) the spelling of the Ellesmere Manuscript to remain unaltered.¹ I quite admit that in the case of some of Chaucer's Minor Poems, where manuscripts are few and bad, it is impossible to adopt for each poem the spelling of the particular scribe whose text we may take. But the Ellesmere Manuscript is admitted to be well spelt, and to go behind it seems to me unnecessary and unhistorical. Six-and-twenty years ago Dr. Furnivall wrote that

"To force a uniform spelling in Chaucer—by whatever process arrived at—would be to force a lie on him

¹ I have also adopted the modern use of *u* and *v*, *i* and *j*, and in a few words where *y* in the MS. stands for the old *ȝ* have written it as *g*.

and on the history of the English language ; an evil for which no fancied gain in convenience of teaching boys could compensate. Before him for hundreds of years is no uniformity ; after him for centuries, none ; why in the works of him—the free and playful—above all others, are letters to lose their power of wandering at their own sweet will ; why are words to be debarred their rightful inheritance of varying their forms ? This notion of a uniform spelling, as applied to Chaucer's words, is to me a Monster, bred by Artificialness out of False Analogy."

The variations of spelling which can safely be eliminated never really disguise a word, and the attempt to introduce into Chaucer's English a modified system of phonetic spelling (phonetic as applied to vowels, if not to consonants) seems to me to involve an assumption of knowledge as to the poet's individual pronunciation considerably beyond what we can lay claim to. If it could be done, I would gladly myself see his works printed, as Shakespeare's are printed, in modern spelling ; because I feel strongly that, at least for the present generation, if Chaucer is to win the popularity which is his due, it must be by his being read as any other poet is read, and not as a text-book for students of Middle English. But we cannot modernise his rhyme-endings without spoiling his rhymes, and as this is so, it seems best to take his spelling as we find it in the best of his manuscripts, rather than by the substitution of an artificial uniformity to make a mountain of a molehill for the pleasure of afterwards paring it away.

So much by way of preface ; we may now pass to

other points. As we know from Chaucer himself, at least one or two of the *Canterbury Tales* were written at an early period of his career, long before the idea of the famous pilgrimage had occurred to him. The Tales may fairly be said to cover his whole poetical life, and as the aim in them all is the same—the artistic telling of a simple story—they afford excellent material for a comparison of Chaucer's methods at different periods, and of the development of his poetic individuality. Late in his life a younger contemporary, in all good faith, hailed him by the title of "graunt translateur," and the ambiguous compliment to some extent has stuck to him, as if he were the mere versifier of other men's imaginings, and nothing more. Now, at the outset of his career, this is really no unfair description of him. From the reference to it as the "Lyf of Seint Cecile," in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, we know that the Second Nun's Tale was one of his early works, and though on the score of the few lines in the Preliminary Invocation which seem to imitate Dante it is usually placed after the Italian journey of 1372-73, it is highly probable that it is considerably earlier even than this.¹

¹ The Invocation is certainly better work than the story itself and may have been added some years afterwards, and the way in which the Dante lines occur is rather suggestive of their being derived from some common original, probably a Latin hymn, than taken straight from the *Paradiso*. As Professor Ten Brink has remarked, there is a connection in style and subject between this tale and the hymn to the Blessed Virgin known as the *ABC*. Ten Brink himself assigned both poems to the date usually assigned to

For his information as to Saint Cecilia, Chaucer went to no more recondite source than the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, and we are thus able to compare his version with the original, and note his conception of his own poetic function. What we find is that for the first 260 lines, considerably more than half the tale, Chaucer is simply a servile translator. He omits nothing, not even the ridiculous interpretations of the name Cecilia at the beginning of the Legend. With some compunction I have indicated in my notes exactly what he adds, a series of tags to fill out the stanzas and provide his rhymes. "As ofte is the manere," "and ye wolde it heere," "as that I shal yow telle," "that shal I thee devyse," "if that I shall nat lye," these are fair specimens of Chaucer's additions. Occasionally he does even worse, as in ll. 125, 126, where the interposition of "and God to love and drede," between "hir preyere" and "bisekyng hym to kepe hir maydenhede," spoils the point, or again in ll. 272, 273, which are a vain repetition of the one before them. There is not a single added touch, not a single phrase of heightened beauty; it is simply the Latin prose cut up into fairly musical English verse, with the aid of a few tags to fill in the corners. After 260 lines Chaucer got tired; in the remaining 200 he abridges his author freely, and upwards of a third of the lines are out of his own head. We note the *Cecile*, viz. about 1373. I should myself be inclined to bring them both back to the date usually given to the *ABC*, viz. about 1366. The *ABC* is certainly the better of the two, and therefore presumably the later.

thus early his delight in providing his characters with appropriate speeches, and the little touch where he makes the Prefect reply to Cecilia's uncompromising insults—

I recché nat what wrong that thou me profre,
For I can suffre it as a philosophre,

is a real contribution to the much-tried magistrate's character.

In the Prologue to the Clerk's Tale of Grisilde, Chaucer tells us (1) that he learnt it from Petrarch, (2) that he learnt it at Padua. The writer of a letter to the *Athenæum* has just suggested that these statements cover the facts that Chaucer learnt the tale (1) from Boccaccio, (2) at Florence, but a simpler method of interpretation seems preferable, and we may therefore believe that Chaucer heard the story on his Italian visit in 1373, and probably wrote his version of it soon afterwards. If we compare this version with Petrarch's Latin, we shall note that Chaucer's mastery of his art is immensely increased. He is no longer obliged to fill out his lines with mere tags, but translates gracefully and easily, and at the same time with remarkable fidelity. For the most part his method is still the same, but he adds a few touches.¹ Thus he does not think it proper that subjects should dictate to their lord quite so boldly as Petrarch makes them, and adds the line (105)

¹ I do not include in my review of these the lines "O stormy people," etc. (995-1001), or the banter at the end of the Tale (ll. 1163-1212), which all critics agree in regarding as later additions made when the poem was given a place among the *Canterbury Tales*.

And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.

The Marquis on his side is a little more imperious. If his subjects will not assent to his conditions, they must drop the matter altogether (ll. 174, 175), and they have a suspicion that he may be fooling them after all (ll. 249-52). Chaucer shows good sense in heightening in one place (ll. 459-62) Petrarch's mild disapproval of the husband's conduct, and in another (ll. 621, 623) introduces a fresh reprobation of it. He invents also for Grisilde a farewell speech (ll. 853-60), of which the keynote

Love is nocht oold as whan that it is newe

would have seemed to Petrarch a blot on her perfection, but which the modern reader gladly welcomes. Her address to her new-found children (ll. 1087-1113) is also Chaucer's addition, as is the form of her soliloquy as she hurries over her work on the marriage day (ll. 281-87). To Chaucer also we owe the pretty picture of Grisilde setting down her water-pot and kneeling to hear what the Marquis has to say (ll. 290-94), and his also are the lines—

But thogh this maydè tendre were of age,

Yet in the brest of hire virginitee

Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage (ll. 218-20),

and again the touching words—

Have heer agayn youre litel yongè mayde (l. 567),

with which she gives back her tiny daughter to the cruel sergeant.

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In the Clerk's Tale, then, we find Chaucer no longer a servile translator, but still keeping closely to his text. In the story of Constance, assigned, not at all happily, to the busy Sergeant-at-Law, he took another step, and a long one, in the direction of freedom. We have no external evidence of the date of the original composition of this tale, and in the present connection to deduce from its handling that it must be earlier than Chaucer's finest work would involve an argument in a circle. But its subject, metre and tone all connect it with the two stories at which we have been looking, and I do not think that we can be wrong in placing it some little time before *Troilus and Cressida*, i.e. about 1378-1380. Chaucer found the legend in the Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet, and he only varies from his authority in one or two minor incidents, e.g. he refuses to make Constance acquire a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon in her childhood at Rome, and with still better taste makes the villainous steward fall overboard in the course of the struggle, instead of being pushed from behind by Constance when his back was turned. He also softens Trivet's monstrous prodigality of time, speaking of Maurice, the son of Constance and Alla, as a child at the time of Alla's arrival at Rome, instead of, with Trivet, making him a lad of seventeen. In the main, however, he follows Trivet faithfully, accepting without a murmur the great blot on the story by which both its tragedies turn on the same incident, the wickedness of a heathen mother-in-law. But he is no longer a translator.

Mr. Brock's statement that "of the 1029 lines of which the tale consists about 350 are Chaucer's additions," must not be understood as implying that the other 679 are translated from Trivet, as the bulk of the Clerk's Tale was translated from Petrarch. The dots which I have placed against the lines which follow Trivet unusually closely will show at a glance that Chaucer only translates in the sense that he takes over Trivet's statements of facts, with the result that the words of the French and the words of the English in these lines naturally correspond. Where the fact is not absolutely bald, he uses his own words and phrases, and turns prose into poetry with a free hand. As Mr. Brock noted, his substantive additions, as distinct from this continual recasting, amount to over a third of the tale. He brings in, as poetic ornaments, moral reflections from the *De Contemptu Mundi*, astrological lore from a variety of authors, and, best of all, some very fine speeches and descriptions out of his own head. In a word, he handles his materials with the utmost freedom in every other respect, but does not yet feel sufficiently sure of himself to improve on the plot, save in a few trifling details.

About 1380-82 Chaucer was at work on his *Troilus and Cressida*, and among the many lessons which he must have learnt in the course of writing it, not the least must have been a knowledge of his own power. He had made us, for very pity, to forgive Cressida, even to feel a sneaking affection for her rascally Eem, and it was impossible for the poet who

could so transform these two characters to retain any superstitious reverence for the plots of Boccaccio. In his *Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer alludes to a tale "al the love of Palamon and Arcyte," and the best scholars agree in understanding this as a reference to a (supposed) lost version of the story in which Chaucer followed Boccaccio more closely and which he subsequently suppressed. Probably, if so, the *Teseide* competed with the *Filostrato* as the subject for a long poem about 1380, and after some few hundred lines had been written Palamon and Arcyte were laid aside for Troilus and Cressida. According to the generally-received view the fragment of *Queen Anelida and false Arcyte* represents a second essay on the same theme.¹ One point only in it concerns us here. The first four stanzas describe Theseus riding in triumph to Athens, and he is then left severely alone, and though we have three hundred more lines of the story extant, we do not even approach an explanation of what Theseus has to do with it. It does not seem unjust to credit this blunder in arrangement to the influence of Boccaccio. Like Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* the *Teseide* is called, not after the persons in whom we are mainly interested, but after a striking

¹ Despite some slight difficulties I cannot myself feel sure that economy does not bid us regard this poem as the one alluded to in the *Legend of Good Women*. If not, I would propose to date the Knight's Tale (which is somewhat long to have been written especially for the Canterbury series) a little before 1385 instead of a little after, and refer the allusion to this. I find it difficult to believe that Chaucer attacked the same subject three times, or that any poem by him on such a theme could entirely perish.

figure whose influence dominates the plot without being its hero. Boccaccio, like a true chronicler, devotes a whole canto to describing the war of Theseus with the Amazons, sees him on board ship homeward bound, digresses to explain to us what had been happening at Thebes, and then returns to Theseus to bring him to the encounter with the Theban ladies who, we know, are awaiting him. In *Queen Anelida* Chaucer must have intended to follow the same plan, with a digression of much greater length.¹ When he rewrote the story he was a better poet. We ride with Theseus towards Athens, we share his wonder at the throng of women mourning amid his triumph, and they, and not the chronicler, explain to us, as to him, the cause of their weeping. The poem is shortened by a good many lines, and the effect is incomparably more dramatic.

I have worked out this little point as to the opening of the Knight's Tale at some length, because, not only does it show us how Chaucer improved on his own earlier version, but it is typical of his whole treatment of the *Teseide*. He is continually abridging, and in almost every incident of the poem his dramatic instinct enables him to improve on his original. This heightening of the dramatic interest of the story is especially evident in all that relates to the rivalry between the two cousins. In the *Teseide* it is Arcyte

¹ If I am right in identifying *Anelida and the false Arcyte* with the story mentioned in the *Legend*, this digression of Chaucer's must have been intended to alienate our sympathy from Arcyte, and prepare us for the ultimate success of his rival Palamon.

who first sees Emily ; he calls Palamon to the window, they discuss together as to whether she is goddess or mortal woman, and there is no question of jealousy between them. When Arcyte is set free, after going first to Thebes, he visits Corinth, Mycenæ and Ægina, before he returns to Athens. Palamon hears from a servant of his cousin's arrival, and we are told elaborately how he escapes from prison, provided with sword and horse. He chances upon Arcyte asleep, and points out to him that as Emily can only be the wife of one of them it will be an act of friendship if Arcyte surrenders his claim. Arcyte cannot bring himself to this, but is very reluctant to decide the question by combat, and regards this as the culminating cruelty of fate towards the house of Thebes. But there is no other way of settling the matter, and both knights having their swords and horses they set to. Theseus arrives and politely asks to be informed who they are and what they are fighting for. Arcyte replies that he is 'Theseus' servant, and is fighting this valiant knight on a question of love. Palamon, in his turn, prefaces his confession of prison-breaking by the remark that the nobility of Theseus gives him confidence to make it. Theseus is a little annoyed, but readily owns that love is an excuse for any folly, and proceeds to arrange matters to their satisfaction.

Contrast with this Chaucer's treatment of the story. He begins by allowing Palamon to see Emily first, and thus, despite Arcyte's ingenious quibble, gives poetic justice an interest in his success. The rest of

the story is a series of dramatic pictures—the fierce quarrel in the prison, the vision of Mercury that sends Arcyte back from Thebes to Athens, the overheard soliloquy in the wood, and Palamon's cry of wrath—

Arcite, false traytour wikke!
Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so—

Arcyte's sword unsheathed on the instant, and his hand only stayed by the sight of his friend weaponless, and then the noble lines—

Have heer my trouthe, tomorwe I wol nat faile,
Withouté wityng of any oother wight,
That heere I wol be founden as a knyght,
And bryngen harneys right ynough for thee,
And chese the beste and leve the worste for me—

it is Chaucer who imagines all this, and when the morrow comes his invention does not fail him. Arcyte arrives, "allone as he was born," carrying the two sets of arms and armour with him. There is the fine simile of the hunter changing colour as he sets himself to withstand the wild boar's rush, and then

Ther nas no "Good day," ne no saluyng,
But streight, withouten word or rehersyng,
Everich of hem heelpen for to armen oother,

and they fall to with their sharp spears. When Theseus arrives he does not content himself with a polite question, but spurs his horse

And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd, and cridê, "Hoo!

Namoore, up peyne of lesynge of youre heed !
By myghty Mars, he shal anon be deed
That smyteth any strook, that I may seen."

There is no paltering in answer to his question who these are who dare fight without his leave ; Palamon blurts the whole story out, and asks death for himself so that his fellow may not live to triumph over him. Death he has asked, and death they shall have, says Theseus, and it is only when Hippolyta and Emily are on their knees before him that his anger at these breakers of troth and prison subsides, and he sees the humour of the situation. What a series of pictures, and not one of them to be found in Boccaccio !

In the treatment of Emily the *Teseide* is not so inferior, though Boccaccio is not always polite to her. When the cousins are gazing at her from their prison window she catches sight of them, and continues to desport herself, not, we are told, with the deliberate object of entrapping their affections, but from that

"Vanitate,
Chè innato è alle femmine nel core.

Again, when Arcyte is banished from Athens he prays to heaven that he may see his lady once more, and the prayer is heard. As he passes, Emily is leaning on her balcony, and notes with some compassion this handsome youth, departing so sorrowfully into exile. His face lingers in her memory, for when he returns in disguise she recognises him at once, and

wonders what has brought him back to Athens at the risk of his freedom, if not his life. All this Chaucer omits, partly, perhaps, to lead up to Theseus' pleasant chaff on the lovers, who fought for a lady who knew nothing about them, but more probably because it all tends to raise the importance of Arcyte, whose claims he deliberately minimises, though no longer representing him as forfeiting sympathy by his "falseness."

As is shown by the marks which (availing myself of Mr. H. L. D. Ward's collation for the Chaucer Society) I have placed by the side of the text, in the rest of the story Chaucer follows Boccaccio much more closely, though, if space permitted, it would not be difficult to point out many details in which he has improved upon his original. Enough, however, has been said to show that by the time Chaucer wrote the Knight's Tale he had advanced far indeed, not only from the slavish adherence to the text of his original which we find in the *Lyf of Seint Cecyle*, but also from that slavish adherence to his plot which mars the story of Constance, and, to some extent, that of Grisilde. Henceforth we have no more "originals" with which to compare his work,¹ we have only "analogues," stories, that is to say, with the same general theme, but with so many differences of

¹ For the Franklin's Tale it is still possible to hope that the Breton "lay" which Chaucer tells us he took the story from, may one day be found. The Tale (if we could only expunge the intolerable recital of the heroines of chastity) is so perfectly told that to be able to compare it with its original would be exceptionally interesting.

setting, of local colour and incident that we cannot say which, if any, of the extant versions Chaucer followed. This is the case, for instance, with three such different tales as those of the Prioress, the Reeve, and the Pardoner. The industry of the Chaucer Society has discovered "analogues" to all of them, but it is only the dry bones which have been unearthed, the flesh and blood were the work of the poet himself.

In a note to line 20 of the General Prologue I see that I have rashly given a reference to this Introduction for some further particulars about the Tabard Inn. This is perhaps the best place to satisfy my conscience by noting that at the Dissolution of the Monasteries "a hostelry called the Tabard" was mentioned in the surrender of the Southwark property of the Abbot of Hyde, that in the time of Speght (1602) the inn was managed by a Master J. Preston who had then newly refitted it for the convenience of travellers, and that Stow mentions it in his *Survey of London* (1598) as the most ancient of the many fair inns in Southwark. I do not think that the Chaucer Society will have quite fulfilled its mission if it dissolves without pronouncing definitely if we may take these, or any other references that can be found, as proving that the Tabard was really a noted inn in the poet's time. For whether or no there was a Tabard Inn before the *Canterbury Tales* were written, it is impossible to believe that the spirit of advertisement is so entirely a thing of to-day that

one would not have sprung up as soon as the Tales became famous. And the question is of more than antiquarian interest, for a real Tabard Inn must of necessity carry with it a real Harry Bailey, and in that case what would Mrs. Harry Bailey have said to Chaucer's insinuation that she incited her husband to beat his rascals and generally to break the King's peace? But even if Tabard Inn and its portly Host should be proved imaginary, it is impossible, to me, to doubt that Chaucer himself went a-pilgriming either in 1385 or 1386. The notes of places and times in the talk of his pilgrims are good evidence that he himself had travelled along the road.¹ In February 1385, he had been set free from the drudgery of his official work at the Customs by permission to appoint a deputy, and nothing seems more natural than that he should have used his new-found freedom to take

¹ It is mainly from these talks on the road that the now accepted order of the Tales in nine groups (lettered A—I) was made out by Dr. Furnivall and Mr. Henry Bradshaw. From records of other pilgrimages we know that though the distance was only fifty-six miles, the journey was usually spread over four days, the stages being from London, through Deptford and Greenwich, to Dartford (17th April), from Dartford to Rochester, from Rochester through Sittingbourne to Ospringe (near Faversham), and from Ospringe over Blean Hill to Canterbury. By comparing this itinerary with the Tales it was seen that the Group of Tales, Shipman's, Prioress's, Chaucer's, Monk's and Nun's Priest's, which are linked together by the talks on the road, must have followed immediately on that of the Man of Law. For less cogent reasons the Tales of the Doctor and Pardoner, which in the Ellesmere Manuscript immediately precede the Shipman's, have been placed after that of the Nun's Priest's. These eight Tales (Chaucer's counting as two) in the Ellesmere Manuscript come between those of the Franklin and Second Nun. In other respects the order of the Ellesmere Manuscript is preserved unaltered.

a holiday jaunt, and that the talk and stories of his fellow-pilgrims gave him the idea of using a Canterbury Pilgrimage as a frame-work in which to set the various independent stories he had already written and the new ones which were seething in his brain. As to which of the Tales were new and which were old, it is not possible to dogmatize except in the case of the two or three obviously early ones. We cannot tell how far the *Hous of Fame* and the *Legend of Good Women*, both unfinished, absorbed Chaucer's leisure from the completion of *Troilus and Cressida* to the time when the Canterbury Series was resolved on. On the other hand, opinions differ as to whether we should think of Chaucer as continuing to write down to the very end of the life, or whether, as seems more probable, he wrote but little poetry after 1390. The Knight's Tale and that of the Franklin are in tone so closely linked to *Troilus and Cressida*, that we can hardly be wrong in regarding them as written some years before the tales put into the mouths of the common folk among the pilgrims, Miller, Reeve, Friar, Sompnour, Pardoner, Nun's Priest, and Canon's Yeoman, in which the handling of the verse, the characterization, and the broader humour are all more akin to the immortal Prologue. Other tales, such as those of the Squire, the Shipman, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant and the Manciple, hold an intermediate position, and it is idle to speculate about the order in which they were written. To the Tales of the Clerk and Monk we know that Chaucer added

some touches before incorporating them in his new series, and with all the talks of the Pilgrims added to the new tales he must have been busy enough. Alas, that he did not earlier win his freedom from official drudgery, and for the time wasted, perhaps at the Queen's command, over those legends of Cupid's saints, which, though but half of them were written, are yet so monotonous. Had he started on his pilgrimage to Canterbury but a year or two earlier, the gaps between one group of tales and another might have been fewer, and we might have had an Epilogue of the doings of the Pilgrims at Canterbury which should have surpassed the Prologue itself. But I am sure that by this time the Pilgrims are ready to start, and I should be sorry, by my gossiping, to cause any lover of them to ride as furiously as the Canon and his Yeoman to overtake them on the way.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.

25th May 1894.

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THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE PROLOGUE

Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury

WHÁN that Apríllé with hise shourés soote
The droghte of March hath percéd to the roote,
And bathéd every veyne in swich licóur
Of which vertú engendred is the flour ;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweté breeth 5
Inspiréd hath in every holt and heeth
The tendré croppés, and the yongé sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfé cours y-ronne,
And smalé fowelés maken melodye
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,— 10
So priketh hem Natúre in hir coráges,—
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,

1-9. *whan that Aprille*, etc. In the *Athenæum* of July 8, 1893, Prof. Skeat shows that these famous lines bear a remarkable resemblance to a passage in the fourth book of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Trojana*.

3. *swich*, such.

8. *the Ram*: the sun runs one half course in the sign of the Ram in March, and the second half course in April. The latter ends on April 11th.

11. *corages*, hearts.

And palmeres for to seken straungé strondes,
 To ferné halwés, kowthe in sondry londes ;
 And specially, from every shirés ende 15
 Of Engélond, to Caunturbury they wende,
 The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
 That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

Bifil that in that seson on a day,
 In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay, 20
 Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
 To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
 At nyght were come into that hostelrye
 Wel nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye,
 Of sondry folk, by áventure y-falle 25
 In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
 And wel we weren eséd atté beste.
 And shortly, whan the sonné was to reste, 30
 So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,
 That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
 And madé forward erly for to ryse,
 To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But nathélees, whil I have tyme and space, 35
 Er that I ferther in this talé pace,

14. *ferne halwes*, ancient saints.
kowthe, renowned.

17. *martir*, i.e. Thomas à Becket.

18. *seeke*, sick. In Chaucer, as in French verse, words spelt alike but of differ-

ent meaning are accepted as rhymes.

20. *the Tabard*, i.e. the Tabard Inn. See Introduction.

23. *was for were*, H⁶.

29. *atte*, at the.

33. *forward*, agreement.

Me thynketh it accordaunt to resoun
 To tellé yow al the condicioun
 Of ech of hem, so as it seméd me,
 And whiche they weren and of what degree, 40
 And eek in what array that they were inne ;
 And at a Knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A KNYGHT ther was and that a worthy man,
 That fro the tymé that he first bigan
 To riden out, he lovéd chivalrie, 45
 Trouthe and honóur, fredom and curteisie.
 Ful worthy was he in his lordés werre,
 And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
 As wel in cristendom as in hethénesse,
 And evere honoured for his worthynesse. 50
 At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne ;
 Ful ofté tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
 Aboven allé naciõs in Pruce.
 In Lettow hadde he reyséd and in Ruce,—
 No cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55
 In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
 At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,

40. *weren*, H³ ; *were*, E⁵.

51. *Alisaundre*, Alexandria, taken by Pierre de Lusignan in 1356.

52. *the bord bigonne*, taken the head of the table.

53. *Pruce*, Prussia, *i.e.* in company with the Teutonic Knights.

54. *Lettow*, Lithuania.

54. *reysed*, raided.

Ruce, Russia.

56. *Gernade*, Granada.

57. *Algezir*, taken from the Moors in 1344.

Belmarye, perhaps Palmyra.

58. *Lyeys*, in Armenia, taken from the Turks 1367.

Satalye, Attalia, taken from Turks 1352.

- Whan they were wonne ; and in the Gretē See
 + At many a noble armee hadde he be. 60
 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
 And foughten for oure feith at Tramysse
 In lystēs thriēs, and ay slayn his foo.
 This ilké worthy knyght hadde been also
 Somtymē with the lord of Palatye 65
 Agayn another hethen in Turkye ;
 And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
 And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
 He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde, 70
 In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
 He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght.
 But for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors weren goode, but he ne was nat gay ;
 Of fustian he weréd a gypon 75
 Al bismóteréd with his habergeon,
 For he was late y-come from his viage,
 And wenté for to doon his pilgrymage.

59. *the Grete See*, the Mediterranean.

60. *armee*, an expedition, especially one by sea ; *aryve*, a disembarkation, H².

62. *Tramysse*, in Africa.

65. *Palatye*, a Christian lordship in Anatolia.

67. *prys*, price, esteem.

74. *was* for *weren*, H⁴, but *hors* can be plural as well as

singular, and if plural may include the horses of the Squire and Yeoman. In any case *he* refers to the Knight.

74. *he ne was*, H² ; *he was*, E⁵.

75. *gypon*, short vest.

76. *habergeon*, coat of mail.

In scanning this line, stress must be laid on the first word, which serves for a whole foot. See Introduction.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIÉR,
 A lovyere and a lusty bacheler, 80
 With lokkés crulle as they were leyd in presse.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
 Of his statúre he was of evene lengthe,
 And wonderly delyvere and greet of strengthe ;
 And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie, 85
 In Flaundrés, in Artoys and Pycardie,
 And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
 Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
 Al ful of fresshé flourés whyte and reede ; 90
 Syngynge he was or floytynge, al the day ;
 He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
 Short was his gowne, with slevés longe and wyde ;
 Wel koude he sitte on hors and fairé ryde ;
 He koudé songés make and wel endite, 95
 Juste and eek daunce and weel purtreye and write.
 So hote he lovède that by nyghtertale
 He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
 Curteis he was, lowely and servysáble,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he and servántz namo
 At that tyme, for hym listé ridé soo ;

- | | |
|--|--|
| 81. <i>crulle</i> , curly. | expeditions against the |
| 83. <i>evene</i> , average. | French. |
| 84. <i>delyvere</i> , active. | 88. <i>lady grace</i> : " lady " is here |
| <i>greet of</i> , H ⁴ ; <i>of greet</i> , | a genitive. |
| E ³ . | 89. <i>Embrouded</i> , embroidered. |
| 85. <i>chyvachie</i> , expedition on | 91. <i>floytynge</i> , fluting. |
| horseback. | 97. <i>nyghtertale</i> , night-time. |
| 86. <i>In Flaundres</i> , i.e. in minor | 98. <i>sleep</i> , H ² ; <i>slepte</i> , E ³ . |

And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
 A sheef of pocok arwés bright and kene
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily— 105
 Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly ;
 His arwés droupéd noght with fetherés lowe—
 And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
 A not-heed hadde he with a broun viságe.
 Of woodécraft wel koude he al the uságe. 110
 Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that oother syde a gay daggere
 Harneiséd wel and sharpe as point of spere ;
 A Cristophere on his brest of silver sheene ; 115
 An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene.
 A forster was he, soothly as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
 That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy ;
 Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy, 120
 And she was clepéd madame Eglentyne.
 Ful weel she soonge the servicé dyvyne,

106. *takel*, tackle, especially an arrow.

109. *not-heed*, clean shaved head.

110. *koude*, knew.

111. *bracer*, armour for the arm.

114. *Harneised*, equipped.

115. *Cristophere*, a small figure of St. Christopher worn as a protection from evil.

116. *bawdryk*, baldric or belt.

117. *forster*, forester.

120. *seint Loy*. St. Eligius refused to take an oath which King Dagobert demanded of him, so perhaps this means the Prioress did not swear at all. *seint* is a dissyllable.

121. *cleped*, called.

Entuned in hir nose ful semely,
 And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly *
 After the scole of Stratford-atté-Bowe, 125
 For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
 At meté wel y-taught was she with-alle,
 She leet no morsel from hir lippès falle,
 Ne wette hir fyngrès in hir saucé depe.
 Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe, 130
 Thát no drope ne fille upon hire breste ;
 In curteisie was set ful muchel hir leste.
 Hire over-lippé wypéd she so clene,
 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte, 136
 And sikerly she was of greet desport,
 And ful plesáunt and amyable of port,
 And peynéd hire to countrefeté cheere
 Of Court, and been estatlich of manere, 140
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.
 But for to speken of hire consciéce,

123. *semely*, spelt *semely* in E.

124. *fetisly*, skilfully.

125. *After the scole of Stratford-atté-Bowe* i.e. Anglo-Norman French, still at this time much used at Court. Some have thought that "French of Stratford" means English; but there was a Benedictine nunnery at Stratford-le-Bow, and Chaucer probably means that his Prioress was educated there.

127. *At mete*, etc. Tyrwhitt has pointed out that the next few lines are a reminiscence of a passage in the *Roman de la Rose*, l. 13,612 sqq.

132. *muchel*, mickle, much.
leste, pleasure.

134. *ferthyng*, morsel.

136. *raughte*, reached.

137. *sikerly*, certainly

139. *cheere*, manner.

140. *estatlich*, stately; *to been* for *been*, E^s.

141. *digne*, worthy.

She was so charitable and so pitous
 She woldé wepe if that she saugh a mous
 Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. 145
 Of smalé houndés hadde she that she fedde
 With rosted flessch, or milk and wastel breed ;
 But sooré wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerdé smerte,
 And al was conscience and tendré herte. 150

Ful semyly hir wympul pynchéd was ;
 Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
 Hir mouth ful smal and ther-to softe and reed,
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed ;
 It was almoost a spanné brood I trowe, 155
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetys was hir cloke as I was war ;
 Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
 A peire of bedés gauded al with grene,
 And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene, 160
 On which ther was first write a crownéd A,
 And after *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNÉ with hire haddé she
 That was hire Chapéleyn, and preestés thre.

147. *wastel breed*, cake of fine flour.

148. *oon*, H^o ; any, E.

149. *yerde*, stick.
smerte, smartly.

151. *wympul*, a covering for the neck.

152. *tretys*, well made.

156. *hardily*, surely.

157. *fetys*, neat.

159. *gauded*, dyed, especially dyed green ; or perhaps, having in green the gawdies, or large beads which stood for the Lord's Prayer.

160. *sheene*, beautiful.

162. *Amor vincit omnia*: Love overcomes all things.

164. *Chapeleyn*, the nun in a

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie, 165
 An outridere that lovède venerie,
 A manly man, to been an abbot able.
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
 And whan he rood men myghte his brydel heere
 Gýnglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere, 170
 And eek as loude, as dooth the chapel belle,
 Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.
 The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
 By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,—
 This ilkè Monk leet oldè thyngès pace 175
 And heeld after the newè world the space.
 He gaf nat of that text a pullèd hen
 That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,
 Ne that a Monk whan he is recchèlees
 Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees; 180
 This is to seyn, a Monk out of his cloystre.
 But thilkè text heeld he nat worth an oystre;

priory who said the minor
 offices for which the
 presence of a priest was
 not necessary.

165. *a fair*, etc.; one likely to be master.

166. *venerie*, hunting.

170. *als*, as; H, *so*.

172. *Ther as*, where that.

173. *seint Maure*, a disciple of *seint Beneit* or Benedict, established the Benedictine Order in France.

174. *som-del*, something.
streit, narrow.

175. *leet forby hem pace* for *leet olde thynges*, H.
pace, pass.

176. *space*, Lansdowne MS.
reads *pace*.

177. *that text*, from the Decretal of Gratian, "Sicut piscis sine aqua caret vita, ita sine monasterio monachus."
pulled, plucked.

179. *recchèlees*, reckless; *cloysterles*, H only; neither reading is satisfactory.

180. *til*, to; *to*, H².

182. *thilke*, that same.

And I seyde his opinioun was good.
 What sholde he studie and make hym-selven wood,
 Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure, 185
 Or swynken with his handés and laboure
 As Austyn bit? how shal the world be served?
 Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
 Therefore he was a prikasour aright;
 Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight:
 Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare 191
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleves y-purfiled at the hond
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And for to festne his hood under his chyn 195
 He hadde of gold y-wroght a ful curious pyn,
 A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
 His heed was balled that shoon as any glas,
 And eek his face as it hadde been enoynt.
 He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt; 200
 Hise eyën stepe and rollynge in his heed,
 That steméd as a forneys of a leed;
 His bootés souple, his hors in greet estaat.
 Now certainly he was a fair prelaat.

184. *What*, why.*wood*, mad.186. *swynken*, toil.187. *Austyn*, Saint Augustine.*bit*, biddeth.188. *owne swynk* for *swynk*, F.189. *prikasour*, hard rider.191. *prikyng*, spurring.192. *lust*, pleasure.193. *seigh*, saw.193. *y-purfiled*, trimmed.194. *grys*, gray fur.196. *ful*, om. H.199. *it*, F²; *he*, H⁵.*enoynt*, anointed.200. *poynt*, condition.201. *stepe*, bright.202. *leed*, leaden vessel;"shone like a furnace
under a cauldron."

He was nat pale, as a forpynéd goost : 205
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost ;
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A FRERE ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
 A lymytour, a ful solempné man,
 In allé the ordres foure is noon that kan 210
 So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage ;
 He haddé maad ful many a mariage
 Of yongé wommen at his owene cost :
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post,
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215
 With frankeleyns over al in his contree ;
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun,
 For he hadde power of confessioun,
 As seyde hym-self, mooré than a curát,
 For of his ordre he was licenciát. 220
 Ful swetely herdé he confessioun,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun.
 He was an esy man to geve penaunce
 Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce ;

205. *forpyned*, wasted by torment.

209. *lymytour*, one licensed to beg within certain limits.

210. *ordres foure*, Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans, and Augustinians.

212. *i-made* for *maad*, H. *ful many a mariage*, etc. ; the insinuation is that he found husbands for women he had himself seduced.

215. *And for Ful*, E. *famulier*, familiar.

217. *eek*, om. E^B.

220. *licenciát*, i.e. he was licensed to hear confessions without asking leave of the priest of the parish.

224. *Ther as*, where that. *wiste han for wiste to have*, H. *pitaunce*, portion of food.

For unto a poure ordre for to give 225
 Is signé that a man is wel y-shryve ;
 For, if he gaf, he dorsté make avaunt
 He wisté that a man was répentant :
 For many a man so harde is of his herte
 He may nat wepe al thogh hym sooré smerte, 230
 Therfore in stede of wepyng and preyéres
 Men moote geve silver to the pouré freres.
 His typet was ay farsed full of knyves
 And pynnés, for to geven yongé wyves ;
 And certeinly he hadde a murye note ; 235
 Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote :
 Of yeddynges he baar outrély the pris ;
 His nekké whit was as the flour-de-lys,
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
 He knew the tavernes well in al the toun 240
 And everich hostiler and tappestere
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere ;
 For unto swich a worthy man as he
 Acordéd nat, as by his facultee,
 To have with siké lazars aqueyntaunce ; 245
 It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce

227. *avaunt*, boast.233. *typet*, hood.*farsed*, stuffed.234. *faire* for *yonge*, H⁶.236. *rote*, a small harp.237. *yeddynges*, proverbial say-
ings.*outrély*, utterly.240. *al the*, E ; *every*, H⁶.241. *hostiler*, innkeeper.*tappestere*, barmaid.242. *Bet*, better.*lazar*, leper.*beggestere*, beggarwoman,
but these feminine forms
are perhaps not to be
emphasized.244. *Acordéd nat, as by his*
facultee, was not fitting,
as he thought.245. *sike*, sick.

Fór to deelen with no swiche poraille ;
 But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
 And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,
 Curteis he was and lowely of servyse, 250
 Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.
 He was the besté beggere in his hous,*
 For thogh a wydwe haddé noght a sho,
 So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
 Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente : 255
 His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
 And rage he koude, as it were right a whelpe.
 In lové dayes ther koude he muchel helpe,
 For there he was nat lyk a cloysterer
 With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scolér, 260
 But he was lyk a maister, or a pope ;

247. *swiche*, such.
poraille, poor folk.

248. *vitaille*, victuals.

249. *ther as*, where that.

251. *nas*, ne was, was not.

252. Hengwrt MS. here inserts
 two lines :

“ And gaf a certeyn ferme
 for the graunt,
 Noon of his bretheren cam
 ther in his haunt ”

i.e. paid rent for his
 privilege and was left
 undisturbed by his
 brethren. The couplet
 is probably Chaucer's,
 but may have been de-
 liberately omitted by
 him, as it certainly in-
 terrupts the sentence.

254. *In principio*, the first two
 words of St. John's
 Gospel : the beginning
 of a Friar's address.

256. *His purchas*, etc. Hee arnt
 more than he received
 from fixed property : a
 proverbial phrase pointed
 here by the fact that of
 fixed property friars had
 none.

257. H reads “ and rage he
 couthe and pleye[n] as a
 whelpe.”

258. *love dayes*, days for settling
 disputes, when the friar
 would act as judge, and
 favour whom he pleased.

259. *cloysterer*, a monk. E⁴
 adopt the form *cloysterer*
 which spoils the rhythm.

Of double worstede was his semycope,
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 Somwhat he lipsed for his wantownesse,
 To make his Englissh sweet upon his tonge, 265
 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
 Hise eyen twynkled in his heed aryght
 As doon the sterrés in the frosty nyght.
 This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd, 270
 In mottéleye, and hye on horse he sat ;
 Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bevere hat ;
 His bootés claspéd faire and fetisly ;
 Hise resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Sownynge alway thencrees of his wynnýng. 275
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing
 Bitwixé Middelburgh and Oréwelle.
 Wel koude he in eschaungé sheeldés selle.
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,
 Ther wisté no wight that he was in dette, 280

262. *semycope*, short cloak.

264. *lipsed*, lisped.

267. *aryght*, exactly.

268. *sterres*, stars.

269. *lymytour*, see 209.
cleped, called.

271. *mottéleye*; *motlee*, E.

273. *fetisly*, neatly.

274. *resons*, opinions, talk.

275. *sownynge*, tending to.
thencrees, the increase.

276. *for any thing*, at any
 cost.

277. *Middelburgh*, nearly opposite the Orwell on the Dutch coast. Professor Hales notes that between 1384 and 1388 the wool-staple was at Middelburgh instead of at Calais.

278. *sheeldes*, French crowns or *denars*: he could profit by the turn of exchange.

279. *bisette*, used.

So estatly was he of his governaunce
 With his bargaynes and with his chevyssaunce.
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle
 But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also 285
 That unto logyk haddé longe y-go,
 As leené was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
 But lookéd holwe and ther-to sobrelly ;
 Ful thredbare was his overeste courtēpy ; 290
 For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
 Ne was so worldly for to have office ;
 For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
 Twénty bookés clad in blak or reed
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie, 295
 Than robés riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie :
 But al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet haddé he but litel gold in cofre ;

282. *chevyssaunce*, agreement, especially for borrowing.

284. *noot*, ne-wot, know not.

285. *clerk*, a scholar.
Oxenford, an old way of writing Oxford.

286. *y-go*, gone.

288. *And* for first *As*, E ; *Also*, H.

290. *overeste courtēpy*, top cape.

292. *office*, i.e. secular employment.

293. *hym was levere*, he had rather.

296. *fithele*, fiddle.
sautrie, psaltery, a kind of harp.

297. *al be that*, although.
philosophre, an allusion to the philosophy of the alchemists.

298. *Yet haddé*, perhaps the line should be read : *Yét hadde he*, etc.

But al that he myghte of his freendes hente
 On bookés and his lernynge he it spente, 300
 And bisily gan for the soulés preye
 Of hem that gaf hym wher-with to scoleye.
 Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,
 Noght o word spak he mooré than was neede,
 And that was seyð in forme and reverence 305
 And short and quyk and ful of hy sentéce.
 Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWÉ, war and wys,
 That often haddé been at the Parvys, 310
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
 Discreet he was and of greet reverence ;
 He seméd swich, hise wordés weren so wise.
 Justice he was ful often in Assise,
 By patente and by pleyn commissioun : 315
 For his science and for his heigh renoun.
 Of fees and robés hadde he many oon ;
 So greet a purchasour was nowher noon.
 Al was fee symple to hym in effect,

299. *hente*, get.300. *his*, E and H ; rest *on*.302. *scoleye*, attend school.304. *o*, one.306. *sentence*, meaning.307. *Sownynge in*, tending to.309. *war*, prudent.310. *Parvys*, church-porch, *i.e.*
 of St. Paul's, where

lawyers met for consultation.

315. *pleyn*, full.318. *purchasour*, prosecutor.319. *fee symple*, the most absolute form of possession of an estate. The meaning here may be either (literally) that the Ser-

His purchasyng myghte nat been infect. 320
 Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he seméd bisier than he was.
 In termés hadde he caas and doomés alle
 That from the tyme of kyng William were falle ;
 Ther-to he koude endite and make a thyng, 325
 Ther koudé no wight pynchen at his writyng ;
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
 He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote.
 Girt with a ceint of silk with barrés smale ;
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330

A FRANKÉLEYN was in his compaignye.
 Whit was his berd as is a dayésye,
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sope in wyn ;
 To lyven in delit was evere his wone, 335

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p> geant could overcome
 all restrictions on owner-
 ship, or (metaphorically)
 that he could carry all
 before him.
 320. <i>purchasyng</i>, prosecuting.
 <i>infect</i>, made invalid :
 others explain, " tainted
 by bribery," but Chaucer
 would hardly have men-
 tioned a moral virtue so
 casually.
 321. <i>nas</i>, ne was, was not.
 323. <i>In termes</i>, etc., " he knew
 well all the cases and de-
 cisions (doomes) that had
 occurred from the time </p> | <p> of William the Con-
 queror."
 324. <i>y-falle</i> for <i>falle</i>, E.
 325. <i>make a thyng</i>, draw up a
 document.
 326. <i>pynchen at</i>, cavil at ;
 <i>pynchen</i>, E, H ; rest
 <i>pynche</i>.
 327. <i>coude</i>, knew.
 <i>pleyn</i>, fully.
 328. <i>medlee</i>, of mixed stuff.
 329. <i>ceint</i>, girdle.
 332. <i>heed</i> for <i>berd</i>, E.
 334. <i>by the morwe</i>, of a morning.
 <i>sope in wyn</i>, bread dipped
 in wine.
 335. <i>wone</i>, custom. </p> |
|---|--|

For he was Epicurus owenè sone,
 That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit
 Was verraily felicitee parfit.
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he ;
 Seint Julian was he in his contree ; 340
 His breed, his ale, was always after oon ;
 A bettre envynéd man was nowher noon.
 Withouté baké mete was nevere his hous,
 Of fissh and flessch, and that so plenteuous
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke. 345
 Of allé deyntees that men koudè thynke
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
 So chaungéd he his mete and his soper.
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe
 And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe. 350
 Wo was his cook but if his saucé were
 Poynaunt and sharpe and redy al his geere.
 His table dormant in his halle alway,
 Stood redy covered al the longé day.
 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire ; 355
 Ful ofté tymé he was knyght of the shire.
 An anlaas, and a gipser al of silk,

340. St. Julian was famed for providing his votaries with good entertainment.

341. *after oon*, of one kind, *i.e.* the best.

342. *envyned*, "cellared," supplied with wine.
nevere for *nowher*, E⁴.

345. *snewed*, abounded.

349. *muwe*, mew, coop.

350. *stuwe*, stew, fish-pond.

351. *but if*, unless.

352. *Poynaunt*, pungent.

353. *table dormant*, fixed table as opposed to moveable trestles.

357. *anlaas*, dagger.
gipser, pouch.

Heeng at his girdel whit as morné milk ;
 A shirreve hadde he been and a countour.
 Was nowher such a worthy vavasour. 360

An HABERDASSHERE, and a CARPENTER,
 A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPYCEr,—
 And they were clothed allé in o lyveree
 Of a solémpne and greet fraternitee ;
 Ful fressh and newe hir geere apikéd was ; 365
 Hir knyvés weré chapéd noght with bras,
 But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
 Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.
 Wel seméd ech of hem a fair burgeys
 To sitten in a geldehalle, on a deys. 370
 Éverich for the wisdom that he kan
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.
 For catel haddé they ynogh and rente,
 And eek hir wyvés wolde it wel assente ;
 And ellés certeyn weré they to blame. 375
 It is ful fair to been y-cleped *Madame*,

359. *countour*, auditor; *a* om.
 E³.

360. *vavasour*, landholder.

362. *Webbe*, weaver.

*Tapyce*r, tapestry-maker.

363. *o*, one. H reads "Weren
 with uss eeke clothed in
 oo lyvere."

364. E³ add *a* before *greet*, with
 which reading we must
 scan: "Of a só | lempne
 and | ," etc.

365. *geere*, clothing.
apiked, trimmed.

366. *chapéd*, capped; *i-chapud*,
 H.

368. *everydeel*, every whit.

370. *geldehalle*, guildhall.
deys, dais.

371. *Everich*, each; *every man*,
 H.

kan, knows.

373. *catel*, chattels.

And goon to vigiliés al bifore,
And have a mantel roialliche y-bore.

A Cook they haddé with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknès with the marybones 380
And poudré-marchant tart and galyngale ;
Wel koude he knowe, a draughte of Londoun ale ;
He koudé rooste and sethe and boille and frye,
Máken mortreux and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughté me, 385
That on his shyne a mormal haddé he,
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, wonynge fer by weste ;
For aught I woot he was of Dertémouthé.
He rood upon a rouncy as he kouthe, 390
Ín a gowne of faldyng to the knee.
A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
Abouté his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hooté somer hadde maad his hewe al broun,
And certainly he was a good felawe. 395
Ful many a draughte of wyn he haddé drawe

377. *vigilies*, wakes, festivals
on the dedication-day of
the parish church.

379. *for the nones*, for the nonce,
for the occasion.

380. *chiknes*, chickens.
marybones, marrow-bones.

381. *poudre - marchand*, etc.,
bitter flavouring powder
and sweet cypress root.

384. *mortreux*, a sort of stew.

386. *mormal*, gangrene.

388. *wonynge*, living.

390. *rouncy*, hack.

391. *faldyng*, coarse cloth.

392. *laas*, cord.

396. *he hadde drawe*, Corpus ;
hadde he i-drawe, Cam-
bridge ; *hadde he drawe*,
EH³.

Fro Burdeuxward whil that the Chapman sleepe.
 Of nycé conscience took he no keepe.
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond ;
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond. 400
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
 His stremés and his daungers hym bisides,
 His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage,
 Ther nas noon swich from Hullé to Cartage.
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake : 405
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake ;
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
 From Gootlond to the Cape of Fynystere,
 And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
 His barge y-clepéd was the Maudélayne. 410

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK ;
 In all this world ne was ther noon hym lik,
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye ;
 For he was grounded in astronomye.
 He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel 415
 In heures by his magyk natureel.
 Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent

400. *By water*, etc., i.e. he drowned his prisoners.

403. *herberwe*, harbour.
lodemenage, pilotage.

407. *wel*, om. E⁶.

408. *Gootlond*, Jutland ; *Scotlond*, H.

409. *cryke*, a creek or inlet.
Britaigne, Brittany.

411. *With us ther was*, E⁶ ;
Ther was also, H.

415. *kepte*, observed.
a full greet deel, E⁶ ; *wonderfully wel*, H.

416. *In heures*, according to the astrological hours.
magyk natureel, knowledge of the secret properties of nature.

417. *fortunen*, presage.

Of hise ymáges for his paciënt.
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye, 420
 And where they engendred and of what humour;
 He was a verray parfit praktisour.
 The cause y-knowe and of his harm the roote,
 Anon he gaf the siké man his boote.
 Ful redy hadde he hise apothecaries 425
 To sende him droggès and his letuaries,
 For ech of hem made oother for to wynne,
 Hir frendshipe nas nat newé to bigynne.
 Wel knew he the oldé Esculapius
 And Deÿscorides, and eek Rufus, 430
 Olde Ypocras, Haly and Galyen,

418. *ymages*, astrological figures, cp. *Hous of Fame*, iii. 175-180.

420. *hoot, or cold*, etc., the four elements of which the world was believed to be composed.

421. *where they engendred*, so EH³, three MSS. omit *they*, and one substitutes *it*.

424. *gaf*, gave.
boote, remedy.

426. *letuaries*, electuaries.

430. *Deÿscorides*, Dioscorides, a physician of the 2nd century A.D., born in Cilicia. His work on *Materia Medica* in five books survives.

Rufus, a physician of Ephesus, about the time

of Trajan. He wrote on anatomy. *Rufus*, Petworth MS.; *Rusus*, H⁴; *Risus*, E.

431. *Olde Ypocras*, Hippocrates, born in Cos about 460 B.C. Some sixty works bearing his name survive.

Haly, or Hali, an Arabian astronomer and commentator on Galen in the 11th century: John Serapion and the famous Avicenna were his contemporaries. But there were also two earlier Serapions who wrote on medicine.

Galyen, Galen, the celebrated Greek physician, born at Pergamus, 130 A.D.

Serapion, Razis and Avycen,
 Averrois, Damascien and Constantyn,
 Bernard and Gatésden and Gilbertyn.
 Of his dieté mesurable was he, 435
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of greet norissyng and digestfble.
 His studie was but litel on the Bible.
 In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
 Lynéd with taffata and with sendal. 440
 And yet he was but esy of dispençe,
 He kepté that he wan in pestilence.
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,
 Therfore he lovède gold in special.

432. *Razis*, or Rhazes, an Arabian physician of the 10th century.

433. *Averrois*, the most famous of Arabian philosophers, born at Cordova 1126, translated Aristotle and wrote "a sort of medical system," translated into Latin under the name of *Colliget*.

Damascien, John Damascene, an Arabic physician and theologian of the 9th century.

Constantyn, Constantinus Afer, born at Carthage in the 12th century, became a monk of Monte Cassino, and by his writings helped to found the medical school of Salerno.

434. *Bernard*, Bernardus Gor-

donius, a contemporary of Chaucer, Professor of Medicine at Montpellier.

434. *Gatesden*, John Gatesden, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and court physician in the first half of the 14th century. He wrote a medical treatise called *Rosa Anglica*.

Gilbertyn, Gilbertus Anglicus, one of the earliest English writers on medicine, fl. 1250.

439. *sanguyn*, red.
pers, blue.

440. *taffata*, *sendal*, varieties of fine silk.

441. *esy of dispençe*, moderate in spending.

442. *pestilence*, the great plague of the 14th century was in 1349, but lesser ones recurred every few years.

- A GOOD WIF was ther of bisidé BATHE, 445
 But she was som-del deaf and that was scathe.
 Of clooth-makyng she haddé swich an haunt
 She passéd hem of Yprès and of Gaunt.
 In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
 That to the offrynge bifore hire sholdé goon, 450
 And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
 That she was out of allé charitee.
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyné weren of ground,—
 I dorsté swere they weyédén ten pound,—
 'That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed. 455
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe ;
 Boold was hir face and fair and reed of hewe.
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
 Housbondes at chirché dore she haddé fyve, 460
 Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,—
 But ther-of nedeth nat to speke as nowthe,—
 And thriés hadde she been at Jerusálem ;
 She haddé passéd many a straungé strem ;
 At Rome she haddé been and at Boloigne, 465
446. *som-del*, somewhat.
scathe, scaith, harm.
 447. *haunt*, practice.
 448. *Gaunt*, Ghent.
 450. *to the offrynge*, offerings in kind or money at mass and other services were presented by the people going up in order to the priest. For the importance of precedence cp. l. 377.
 453. *coverchiefs*, kerchiefs,
- head-dresses, worn under the hat.
 459. *worthy*, well-to-do, respectable.
 460. *at chirche dore*, the first part of the marriage service used to be read at the church door.
 461. *Withouten*, besides.
 462. *nowthe*, now.
 465. *Boloigne*, Boulogne, where an image of the B. Virgin was exhibited to pilgrims.

In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne,
 She koudé muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
 Gat-tothéd was she, soothly for to seye.
 Upon an amblere esily she sat,
 Y-wympléd wel, and on hir heed an hat 470
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe ;
 A foot mantel aboute hir hipés large,
 And on hire feet a paire of sporés sharpe.
 In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe ;
 Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce, 475
 For she koude of that art the oldé daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun
 And was a POURE PERSOUN OF A TOUN ;
 But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk ;
 He was also a lernéd man, a clerk, 480

466. *In Galice at S. Jame, i.e.*
 at the shrine of St. James
 of Compostellain Galicia
 in Spain.

Coloigne, to the shrine of
 the Three Kings of the
 East at Cologne.

467. *koude*, knew.

468. *Gat-tothed*, gate-toothed,
i.e. with teeth wide
 apart; according to a
 piece of folk-lore quoted
 by Prof. Skeat, "a sign
 she should be lucky and
 travel." But in the *Wife's*
 Prologue she says :

"Gat-tothed I was, and
 that bicam me weel,
 I hadde the prente of seint
 Venus seel :"

which points rather to
 the derivation "goat-
 toothed," *i.e.* lascivious.

472. *foot mantel*, according to
 the illustration in the
 Ellesmere MS. this took
 the form of leggings
 stretching from the hips
 down over the boots.
 The spurs were fastened
 over it.

474. *carpe*, chatter.

476. *koude the olde daunce*
 ("Qu'el scet toute la
 vielle dance," *Rom. de*
la Rose), knew the
 ancient custom. *For of*
that art she knew, H.

478. *Persoun of a Toun*, parish
 priest.

That Cristès Gospel trewely wolde preche :
 Hise parissheis devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benygne he was and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient ;
 And swich he was y-prevéd ofté sithes. 485
 Ful looth were hym to cursen for hise tithes,
 But rather wolde he geven, out of doute,
 Unto his pouré parissheis aboute,
 Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce :
 He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce. 490
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
 But he ne lasté nat for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknesse nor in meschief to visíte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, mucche and lite,
 Upon his feet and in his hand a staf. 495
 This noble ensample to his sheepe he gaf
 That firste he wroghte and afterward he taughte.
 Out of the gospel he tho wordés caughte,
 And this figure he added eek therto,
 That if gold rusté what shal iren doo ? 500
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewéd man to ruste ;
 And shame it is, if a prest také keepe,

485. *swich*, such.
y-prevéd, proved.
sithes, times.

486. *looth were hym*, hateful
 would it be to him.
 Failure to pay tithes
 might be punished by
 excommunication.

489. *offryng*, freewill offerings,
 as contrasted with tithes.

492. *ne lasté nat*, did not
 cease.

494. *mucche and lite*, great and
 small.

497. *he, that he*, E in error.

498. *Out of the gospel*, Matt.
 v. 19.

502. *lewéd*, ignorant.

503. *if a prest*, if *that* a preest,
 H.

A shiten shepherde and a clené sheepe.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to geve 505
 By his clennesses how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
 He setté nat his benefice to hyre
 And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
 And ran to Londoun unto Seïnt Poules
 To seken hym a chaunterie for soules ; 510
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,
 But dwelte at hoom and kepté wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie,—
 He was a shepherde, and nóght a mercenarie :
 And though he hooly were and vertuous, 515
 He was to synful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speché daungerous ne digne,
 But in his techyng déscreet and benygne,
 To drawn folk to hevene by fairnesse,
 By good ensample, this was his bisynesse : 520
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
 Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
 A bettré preest I trowe that nowher noon ys ;

504. *shiten*, befouled.508. *leet*, left.510. *chaunterie*, an endowment for a priest to sing masses for the dead. E *chauntrie*.511. *to been withholde*, to be detained, i.e. from his work.512. *dwelte* . . . *kepte*, E *dwelleth* . . . *kepeth*.514. *noght a mercenarie*, Johnx. 12. H reads *no* for *noght a*.516. *despitous*, scornful. E⁸ place *nat* (or *noght*) before *to*.517. *daungerous*, difficult, hard to please. *digne*, dignified, repellent.520. *this*, om. H.523. *snybben*, reprove. *for the nonys*, for the time.

He waited after no pompe and reverence, 525
 Ne maked him a spicéd conscience,
 But Cristés loore, and his Apostles twelve,
 He taughte, but first he folwed it hym selve.

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,— 530
 A trewé swynkere and a good was he,
 Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best, with al his hoolé herte
 At allé tymés, thogh him gamed or smerte,
 And thanne his neighébore right as hym-selve. 535
 He woldé thresshe, and therto dyke and delve
 For Cristés sake for every pouré wight,
 Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght.
 Hise tithés paydé he ful faire and wel
 Bothe of his propré swynk and his catel. 540
 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a REVE and a MILLERE,
 A SOMNOUR and a PARDONER also,
 A MAUNCIPLE and myself,—ther were namo.

The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones, 545
 Ful byg he was of brawn and eek of bones ;

525. *waited*, *E waiteth*.

526. *spiced*, seasoned, and so sometimes used for "over-dainty," sometimes for "corrupt."

530. *fother*, cart-load.

531. *swynkere*, labourer.

534. *he* for *him*, E².

539. *payede* for *payde*, E².

540. *Bothe of his propre swynk*, both of his own labour and his goods.

541. *tabard*, a short coat. *mere*, a mare.

That provéd wel, for over al, ther he cam,
 At wrastlynge he wolde have away the ram.
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
 Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, 550
 Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
 His berd, as any sowe or fox, was reed,
 And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
 Upon the cope right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys, 555
 Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys ;
 His noséthirlés blaké were and wyde ;
 A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde ;
 His mouth as wyde was as a greet forneys,
 He was a jangleré and a goliardeys, 560
 And that was moost of synne and harlotriës.
 Wel koude he stelen corn and tollén thriës,
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.

547. *over al, ther*, everywhere,
 where.

548. *alwey for away*, E³.
the ram, the wrestler's
 prize, cf. *Sir Thopas*,

"Of wrastlyng was ther noon
 his peer
 Wher any ram shall stonde."

549. *knarre*, knot.

550. *nolde*, E *ne wolde*.
heve of harre, lift off its
 hinges.

554. *cope*, top.

555. *werte*, wart.

toft of herys, tuft of hairs.

556. *brustles*, bristles.

erys, ears.

557. *nosethirles*, nostrils.

558. *a bokeler*, a om. Corpus
 MS.

559. *wyde*, H ; *greet*, E⁶.

560. *jangleré*, prater.
goliardeys, a ribald buffoon.

561. *And that*, i.e. his prating
 and jests.

562. *tollén thries*, take three-
 fold his due.

563. *yet he hadde a thombe of
 gold* ; millers are said to
 test samples with their
 thumb. Hence the pro-
 verb "An honest miller
 has a thumb of gold,"
 which suggests the mean-
 ing here to be "yet
 he was honest,—for a
 miller."

A whit cote and a blew hood weréd he,
 A baggépípe wel koude he blowe and sowne, 565
 And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
 Of which achátours myghté take exemple
 For to be wise in byynge of vitaille ;
 For, wheither that he payde or took by taille, 570
 Algate he wayted so in his achaat
 That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
 That swich a lewéd mannès wit shal pace
 The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men ? 575
 Of maistrès hadde he mo than thriës ten,
 That weren of lawe expert and curious,
 Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous
 Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
 Of any lord that is in Engélond, 580
 To maken hym lyvé by his propre good
 In honour dettelees, but if he were wood,
 Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire,
 And able for to helpen al a shire

565. *wel*, om. H.

sowne, sound.

567. *Maunciple*, a purveyor or purchaser of provisions.
temple, an inn of court.

568. *achatours*, buyers.

570. *by taille*, on trust, the debt being scored on a tally.

571. *Algate*, always.
wayted, watched.

571. *achaat*, buying.

572. *biforn*, beforehand, first in the market.

574. *lewéd*, ignorant.
pace, outstrip.

581. *by his propre good*, on his own property.

582. *wood*, mad.

583. *as scarsly*, etc., as frugally as it may please him to wish.

In any caas that myghte falle or happe ; 585
And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The REVÈ was a sclendré colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan ;
His heer was by his erys ful round y-shorn,
His tope was dokéd lyk a preest biforn, 590
Ful longé were his leggès and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne,
Ther was noon auditour koude of him wynne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte and by the reyn, 595
The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordès sheepe, his neet, his dayèrye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this revés governyng,
And by his covenant gaf the rekenyng 600
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age ;
Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.
There nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne ;

586. *sette hir aller cappe*, set
the caps of, *i.e.* befooled,
them all.

589. *erys*, ears.
ful, om. H².

590. *His tope*, etc., *i.e.* he was
bald in front.

592. *Y-lyk*, like.

595. *Wel wiste he*, etc., *i.e.*
when he had to present
his accounts he attributed
the loss of the corn he had
stolen to bad weather.

597. *neet*, cattle.

598. *stoor*, steer.

599. *hoolly*, wholly.

602. *brynge hym in arrerage*,
show him to be a
defaulter.

603. *hierde*, herdsman.

hyne, hind, farm-servant.

604. *he*, *i.e.* the Reeve, though
H reads *they*.
ne, om. E².
covyne, intriguing.

They were adrad of hym as of the deeth. 605
 His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth,
 With grené trees y-shadwéd was his place.
 He koudé bettré than his lord purchace.
 Ful riche he was a-storéd pryvely,
 His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly 610
 To geve and lene hym of his owene good
 And have a thank, and yet a gowne and hood.
 In youthe he lernéd hadde a good myster,
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This Revé sat upon a ful good stot 615
 That was al pomely grey and highté Scot ;
 A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
 And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
 Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
 Biside a toun men clepen Baldéswelle. 620
 Tukkéd he was as is a frere, aboute,
 And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

A SOMONOUR was ther with us in that place,
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnés face,

605. *adrad*, afraid.
the deeth, i.e. the plague.
 606. *wonyng*, dwelling.
 611. *lene*, lend.
 612. E om. second *and*.
gowne, E ; *cote*, H^g.
 613. *myster*, craft.
 615. *stot*, a cob.
 616. *pomely*, dappled.
 617. *pers*, blue.
 620. *clepen*, call.

621. *Tukkéd*, with his coat
 tucked round him.
 623. *Somonour*, apparitor, or
 summoner of offenders
 to the church courts,
 chiefly for immorality.
 624. *cherubynnes face*, the
 author of the *Philobib-*
lon speaks of books bril-
 liantly illuminated as
 " cherubici libri."

For sawcéfleem he was, with eyen narwe. 625
 As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,
 With scaled browes blake and piled berd,—
 Of his visagé children were aferd.
 Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of Tartre noon, 630
 Ne oynément that woldé clense and byte,
 That hym myghte helpen of the whelkés white,
 Nor of the knobbès sittynge on his chekes.
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood ; 635
 Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
 Than wolde he speké no word but Latyn.
 A fewé termés hadde he, two or thre,
 That he had lernéd out of som decree,— 640
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day,
 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
 Kan clepen *Watte* as wel as kan the pope.
 But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie ; 645
 Ay *Questio quid juris* wolde he crie.
 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde ;
 A better felawe sholdé men noht fynde.

625. *sawcefleem*, pimpled from acidity of blood (salsum phlegma).

627. *scaled*, scabby.
piled, plucked, thin.

629. *lytarge*, white-lead.

630. *ceruce*, another form of white-lead.

632. *whelkes*, pimples.

636. *wood*, mad.

643. *Kan clepen Watte*, can call on Wat, or Walter.

644. *grope*, probe.

646. *Questio quid juris*, the question is, what is the law ?

647. *harlot*, rascal.

He woldé suffre for a quart of wyn
 A good felawe to have his concubyn 650
 A twelf monthe, and excuse hym atté fulle ;
 And prively a fynch eek koude he pulle,
 And if he foond owher a good felawe,
 He woldé techen him to have noon awe,
 In swich caas, of the Ercédekenes curs, 655
 But-if a mannés soule were in his purs ;
 For in his purs he sholde y-punysshed be :
 " Purs is the Ercédekenes helle," seyde he.
 But wel I woot he lyéd right in dede,
 Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede, 660
 For curs wol slee,—right as assoillyng savith ;
 And also war him of a *Significavit*.
 In daunger hadde he at his owène gise
 The yongé girlés of the diocise,
 And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed. 665
 A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,
 As greet as it were for an alé-stake ;
 A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake.

651. *atte fulle*, entirely.652. *pulle a fynch*, as we should say "pluck a pigeon," plunder a fool.653. *owher*, anywhere.655. *Ercédekenes*, Archdeacon's.656. *But-if*, unless.660. *him*, Corpus² ; *to*, H² ; om. E².
 661. *slee*, slay.
assoillyng, absolution.
 The dash in the text perhaps fairly indicates Chaucer's innuendo.

 662. *Significavit*, the opening word of a writ for imprisoning an excommunicated person. It mostly began : *Significavit nobis venerabilis frater*.
663. *In daunger*, under his official control.*at his owene gise*, after his own fashion.664. *girlés*, youths of both sexes.667. *for an ale-stake*, poles, sometimes with a bush, sometimes with a hoop,

With hym ther was a gentil PARDONER
 Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer, 670
 That streight was comen fro the court of Romè.
 Ful loude he soong *Com hider, lovè, to me !*
 This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,
 Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex 675
 But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex ;
 By ounces henge hise lökkès that he hadde,
 And therwith he hise shuldres overspradde.
 But thynne it lay by colpons oon and oon ;
 But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon, 680
 For it was trusséd up in his walèt.
 Hym thoughte he rood al of the newè jet,
 Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
 Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare,
 A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe ; 685
 His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe

or garland, used to project seven feet and more from alehouses.

670. *Of Rouncivale*, "An Hospital *Beata Mariæ de Runcyvalle* in *Charing, London* is mentioned in the *Monasticon* [Dugdale's], t. ii. p. 443, and there was a Runceval Hall in Oxford. So that perhaps it was the name of some confraternity." —Tyrwhitt. The parent Roncevaux was in Navarre.

673. *stif burdoun*, a strong bass.

676. *heeng*, hung.

strike of flex, hank of flax.

677. *By ounces*, in small pieces.

679. *colpons*, shreds.

680. *ne*, om. E⁶.

682. *jet*, fashion.

683. *Dischevelee*, dishevelled, with his hair loose.

685. *vernycle*, copy of the supposed imprint of Christ's face on the handkerchief of Saint Veronica, which the Pardoner might have seen at Rome.

686. *lay*, om. E⁶.

Bret-ful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot.
 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot ;
 No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholdé have,
 As smothe it was as it were laté shave ; 690
 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
 But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware
 Ne was ther swich another pardoner,
 For in his male he hadde a pilwé-beer,
 Which that, he seyde, was oure lady veyl ; 695
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
 That Seïnt Peter hadde whan that he wente
 Upon the see til Jhesu Crist hym hente.
 He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones,
 And in a glas he haddé piggés bones. 700
 But with thise relikés, whan that he fond
 A pouré person dwellynge upon lond,
 Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
 Than that the person gat in monthés tweye ;
 And thus with feynéd flaterye and japes 705
 He made the person and the peple his apes.

687. *Bret-ful*, brim-full.688. *hath a*, H *eny*.690. *late*, lately.692. *into for unto*, E⁸.694. *pilwe-beer*, pillow-case.695. *lady* is here a genitive, as in line 88.696. *gobet*, shred.698. *hente*, seized.699. *croys of latoun*, cross of brass.

701, 702. *whan that he fond A pouré person*. This line gave John Heywood the cue for his *Merry play between the Pardoner, the Friar, the Curate and neighbour Pratt*, where the Pardoner's list of relics is borrowed from Chaucer's. The Pardoner-nuisance is well dealt with in Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life*, pp. 312-325 and Appendix.

But, trewely to tellen atté laste,
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste ;
 Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
 But alderbest he song an Offertorie, 710
 For wel he wisté, whan that song was songe,
 He mosté preche and wel afflie his tonge
 To wynné silver, as he ful wel koude ;
 Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

Now have I toold you shortly in a clause 715
 The staat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
 Why that assembled was this compaignye
 In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrye,
 That highte the Tabard, fasté by the Belle.
 But now is tymé to yow for to telle 720
 How that we baren us that ilké nyght,
 Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght ;
 And after wol I telle of our viage
 And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.

But first, I pray yow of youre curteisye, 725
 That ye narette it nat my vileynye,
 Thogh that I pleyedly speke in this mateere
 To tellé yow hir wordés and hir cheere,
 Ne thogh I speke hir wordés proprely,
 For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
 Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,

710. *alderbest*, best of all.

713. *ful*, H *right*.

714. *murierly*, more merrily ;
so merily, Petworth³.

715. *shortly*, Hengwrt³ *soothly*.

723. *viage*, voyage, journey.

726. *narette*, *ne arette*, account
 it not ; *ne rette*, H³.
vileynye, vulgarity.

727. *pleynly speke*, E⁶ ; *speke*
al pleyedly, H.

He moote reherce, as ny as evere he kan,
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
 Al speke he never so rudéliche or large,
 Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewé, 735
 Or feyné thyng, or fyndé wordés newe.
 He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother,
 He moot as wel seye o word as another.
 Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
 And wel ye woot no vileynye is it. 740
 Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,
 "The wordés moote be cosyn to the dede."

Also I prey yow to forgeve it me
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
 Heere in this tale, as that they sholdé stonde ; 745
 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chieré made oure hoost us everichon,
 And to the soper sette he us anon,
 And servéd us with vitaille at the beste :
 Strong was the wyn and wel to drynke us leste. 750

A semely man OURE HOOSTE was with-alle
 For to han been a marchal in an halle.
 A largé man he was, with eyen stepe,
 A fairer burgeys was ther noon in Chepe ;
 Boold of his speche, and wys and well y-taught 755
 And of manhod hym lakkedé right naught.

734. *al*, although.
or, E; *ne*, H; *and*,
 Hengwrt⁵.

738. *o*, one.

741. *Eek Plato seith*. Chaucer
 takes his quotation from

Boethius, *De Consola-
 tione*, bk. iii. prose 12.

741. *that*, om. E⁶.

750. *leste*, was pleasing to.

752. *han*, om. E⁶.

753. *stepe*, bright.

Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
 And after soper pleyen he bigan,
 And spak of myrthe amongès othere thynges,
 Whan that we haddè maad our rekenynges ; 760
 And seyde thus : " Now, lordynges, trewely,
 Ye been to me right welcome, hertely ;
 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
 I ne saugh this yeer so myrie a compaignye
 At onès in this herberwe as is now ; 765
 Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthè, wiste I how.
 And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
 To doon yow ese, and it shal costè noght.

" Ye goon to Canterbury—God yow speede,
 The blisful martir quitè yow youre meede ! 770
 And, wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye ;
 For trewely confort ne myrthe is noon
 To ridè by the weye doumb as a stoon ;
 And therfore wol I maken yow disport, 775
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
 And if you liketh alle, by oon assent,
 Now for to stonden at my juggèment,

764. *I ne saugh*, E⁶ *I saugh*
nat.

765. *herberwe*, lodging.

770. *quite*, pay.

772. *Ye shapen yow to talen*,
 you are preparing your-
 selves to tell stories.

774. *doumb as a stoon*, H⁴ ; E
 reads *the for a* ; Hengwrt
 omits it, rather to the

improvement of the
 metre.

778. *Now*, om. E⁶ : the read-
 ing of H improves the
 metre, but there are too
 many lines in Chaucer
 where the first foot con-
 sists only of words like
for, *in*, *that*, etc. for the
 reading to be certain.

And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
 To-morwé, whan ye riden by the weye, 780
 Now by my fader soulé that is deed,
 But ye be myrie, smyteth of myn heed !
 Hoold up youre hond withouten mooré speche."

Oure conseil was nat longé for to seche ;
 Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, 785
 And graunted hym withouten moore avys,
 And bad him seye his verdit, as hym leste.

"Lordynges," quod he, "now herkneth for the
 beste,

But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn ;
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn, 790
 That ech of yow to shorté with your weye,
 In this viage shal tellé talés tweye,—
 To Caunterburyward, I mean it so,
 And homward he shal tellen othere two,—
 Of aventúres that whilom han bifalle. 795
 And which of yow that bereth hym beste of alle,

782. *But*, E *But-if*.
 for *smyteth of* (i.e. *off*).
 E^s read *I wol geve*
yow.

784. *seche*, seek.

785. *Us thoughte*, it seemed to
 us.

787. *verdit* (spelt *voirdit* by
 E), verdict.

791. *to shorté with your weye*,
 whereby to shorten our
 way. E^s read *oure* for
your, but this makes
 the Host too precipi-
 tate.

793, 794. It would be pleasant
 to find a good MS. which
 omitted these feeble lines,
 which have all the sound
 of an interpolation. But
 though as the Pilgrims pro-
 gress we see clearly that
 they are only to tell *one* tale
 each on their way to Can-
 terbury, the lines must be
 accepted as they stand,
 and Chaucer be convicted,
 after leaving so many other
 poems unfinished, of having
 planned a series of over one
 hundred and twenty tales.

That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
 Talés of best senténcé and moost solaas,
 Shal have a soper at oure aller cost,
 Heere in this placé, sittynge by this post, 800
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
 And, for to makè yow the moorè murý,
 I wol myselven gladly with yow ryde
 Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde,
 And whoso wole my juggément withseye 805
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
 And if ye vouché-sauf that it be so
 Tel me anon, withouten wordés mo,
 And I wol erly shapè me therfore." 809

This thyng was graunted, and oure othés swore
 With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
 That he would vouché-sauf for to do so,
 And that he woldé been oure governour,
 And of our talés juge and réportour,
 And sette a soper at a certeyn pris, 815
 And we wol reuléd been at his devys
 In heigh and lough ; and thus by oon assent
 We been acorded to his juggément.
 And therupon the wyn was fet anon ;
 We dronken and to restè wente echon 820
 Withouten any lenger tarynge.

Amorwé, whan that day gan for to sprynge,

798. *sentence* . . . *solaas*,
 wisdom and pleasantry.

799. *oure aller*, of us all. *your*
aller, H.

803. *myselven*, E² *myself*.

803. *gladly*, E⁸ *goodly*.

817. *In heigh and lough*, i.e.
 in everything.

819. *fet*, fetched.

820. *echon*, each one.

Up roos oure Hoost and was oure aller cok,
 And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok,
 And forth we riden, a litel moore than paas, 825
 Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas ;
 And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste
 And seyde, " Lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste :
 Ye woot youre foreward and I it yow recorde.
 If even-song and morwe-song accorde, 830
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
 As evere mote I drynké wyn or ale,
 Whoso be rebel to my juggement
 Shal paye for all that by the wey is spent !
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne. 835
 He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
 Sire Knyght," quod he, " my mayster and my lord,
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
 Cometh neer," quod he, " my lady Prioress,
 And ye sire Clerk, lat be your shamefastnesse, 840
 Ne studieth noght ; ley hond to, every man."

Anon to drawen every wight bigan
 And, shortly for to tellen as it was,
 Were it by áventúre, or sort, or cas,

823. *oure aller cok*, cock (or alarum) of us all.

825. *paas*, a foot-pace.

826. *the wateryng of S. Thomas*, a brook near the second milestone on the Canterbury Road, where pilgrims watered their horses.

829. *Ye woot youre foreward*, you know your agreement.

835. *draweth cut*, draw lots.
ferrer twynne, depart farther.

844. *aventure*, etc., hazard, destroy, or chance.

The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght, 845
 Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght :
 And telle he moste his tale as was resoun
 By foreward and by composicioun,
 As ye han herd ; what nedeth wordès mo ?
 And whan this goode man saugh that it was so, 850
 As he that wys was and obedient
 To kepe his foreward by his free assent,
 He seyde, "Syn I shal bigynne the game,
 What, welcome be the cut a Goddès name !
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye." 855
 And with that word we ryden forth oure weye,
 And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manère.

854. *What*, why.
thou for *the*, H.

854. *a*, *on*, in God's name.

TALES OF THE FIRST DAY

GROUP A

KNIGHT'S TALE

A discussion of Chaucer's adaptation of Boccaccio's *Teseide* in this tale will be found in the Introduction. The line on the left hand margin, *e.g.* from l. 865 to 883, denotes that the passage forms part of the 374 lines which bear a general, or the 132 which bear a slight, resemblance to the corresponding passages in the *Teseide*. Dots mark the 270 lines directly translated. This collation was originally made by Mr. H. L. D. Ward for the Chaucer Society.

Heere bigynneth The Knyghtes Tale

WHILOM, as oldè stories tellen us,
Ther was a duc that hightè Thesëus ; 860
Of Atthenes he was lord and governour,
And in his tymè swich a conquerour,
That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
Ful many a richè còntree hadde he wonne ;
That with his wysdom and his chivalrie 865
He conquered al the regne of Femenye,

866. *the regne of Femenye*, the kingdom of the Amazons.

That whilom was y-clepéd Scithia ;
 And weddedè the queene Ypolita,
 And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contrée
 With muchel glorie and greet solempnytee, 870
 And eek hir fairè suster Emelye.
 And thus with victorie and with melodye
 Lete I this noble duc to Atthenes ryde
 And al his hoost in armès hym bisyde.
 And certès, if it nere to long to heere, 875
 I wolde han told yow fully the manere
 How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
 By Thesèus and by his chivalrye ;
 And of the gretè bataille for the nones
 Bitwixen Atthenès and Amazones ; 880
 And how asseged was Ypolita,
 The fairè, hardy queene of Scithia,
 And of the feste that was at hir weddýnge,
 And of the tempest at hir hoom comýnge ;
 But al that thyng I moot as now forbere. 885
 I have, God woot, a largè feeld to ere,
 And wayké been the oxen in my plough.
 The remenant of the tale is long ynough,
 I wol nat letten eek noon of this route.
 Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute, 890
 And lat se now who shal the soper wynne,
 And ther I leftè I wol ageyn bigynne.

871. *faire*, H⁶ *yonge*.875. *nere*, ne were, were not.876. *han told yow*, H ; *yow have**toold*, E ; *have told*, rest.886. *ere*, plough.889. *letten*, hinder ; *lette eek*
none of al this, H.

This duc of whom I maké mencioun,
 Whan he was come almost unto the toun
 In al his wele, and in his moosté pride, 895
 He was war, as he caste his eye aside,
 Where that ther kneled in the hyé weye
 A compaignye of ladyes, tweye and tweye,
 Ech after oother, clad in clothés blake;
 But swich a cry and swich a wo they make 900
 That in this world nys creäture lyvyng
 That herdé swich another waymentynge:
 And of this cry they noldé nevere stenten,
 Til they the reynés of his brydel henten. 904

"What folk been ye, that at myn homcomýnge
 Perturben so my festé with criýnge?"
 Quod Thesëus. "Have ye so greet envye
 Of myn honoúr, that thus compleyne and crye?
 Or who hath yow mysboden or offended?
 And telleth me if it may been amended, 910
 And why that ye been clothéd thus in blak?"

The eldeste lady of hem allé spak
 Whan she hadde swowned with a deedly cheere
 That it was routhé for to seen and heere,
 And seyde, "Lord, to whom fortune hath geven 915
 Victorie, and as a conqueror to lyven,
 Nat greveth us youre glorie and youre honoúr,
 But we biseken mercy and sucour.
 Have mercy on oure wo and oure distresse:

897. *hye*, om. E.902. *waymentynge*, lamentation.904. *henten*, seized.909. *mysboden*, abused.913. *cheere*, countenance.917. H omits second *your*.

- Som drope of pitee thurgh thy gentillesse 920
 Upon us wrecchéd wommen lat thou falle :
 · For certès, lord, ther is noon of us alle
 · That she ne hath been a duchesse or a queene.
 Now be we caytyves, as it is wel seene :
 Thankéd be Fortune and hire falsé wheel, 925
 That noon estat assureth to be weel.
 And certès, lord, to abyden youre presence,
 Heere in the temple of the goddesse Clemence
 We han ben waitynge al this fourtényght ;
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy myght. 930
 “ I wrecchê, which that wepe and criê thus,
 · Was whilom wyf to kyng Cappaneüs,
 That starf at Thebès,—curséd be that day,—
 · And allé we that been in this array,
 And maken al this lamentacioun, 935
 We losten alle oure housbondes at that toun,
 Whil that the seegè ther abouté lay,
 And yet now the oldé Creon, weylaway !
 That lord is now of Thebès, the citee,
 Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee, 940
 He for despit and for his tirannye,
 To do the dedé bodyes vileynye
 Of alle oure lordés, whiché that been slawe,
 Hath alle the bodyes on an heepe y-drawe

924. *caytyves*, “captives,” wret-
 ched creatures.

932. *Kyng Cappaneus*, one of
 the seven chiefs who
 attacked Thebes. He
 was struck by lightning

while scaling the walls.

933. *starf*, died.

938. *now*, om. H.

943. *slawe*, slain.

944. *Hath*, E *He hath*, in
 error.

- And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent, 945
- Neither to been y-buryed nor y-brent,
- But maketh houndés ete hem in despit."

And with that word, withouten moore respit,
 They fillen gruf, and criden pitously,
 "Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy, 950
 And latoure sorwé synken in thyn herte."

This gentil duc down from his courser sterte
 With herté pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
 Hym thoughté that his herté woldé breke
 Whan he saugh hem, so pitous and so maat, 955
 That whilom weren of so greet estaat ;
 And in his armés he hem alle up hente,
 And hem conforteth in ful good entente,
 And swoor his ooth, as he was trewé knyght,
 He woldé doon so ferforthly his myght 960
 Upon the tiraunt Creon hem to wreke,
 That all the peple of Grecé sholdé speke
 How Creon was of Thesëus y-served
 As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
 And right anon, withouten moore abood, 965
 His baner he desplayeth and forth rood
 To Thebésward, and al his hoost biside.
 No neer Atthénés wolde he go ne ride,
 Ne take his esé fully half a day,
 But onward on his wey that nyght he lay ; 970

949. *fillen gruf*, fell on their faces.

955. *maat*, dejected.

957. *hente*, took.

960. *so ferforthly*, so far forth,
 so much, that.

968. *neer*, nearer.

And sente anon Ypolita the queene,
 And Emelye hir yongè suster sheene,
 Unto the toun of Atthenés to dwelle,
 And forth he rit ; ther is namoore to telle. 974

The redé statue of Mars with spere and targe
 So shyneth in his whitè baner large,
 That alle the feeldès glyteren up and down,
 And by his baner born is his penoun
 Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete
 The Mynotaur, which that he slough in Crete. 980

Thus rit this duc, thus rit this conquerour,
 And in his hoost of chivalrie the flour,
 Til that he cam to Thebès, and alighte
 Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoughtè fighte.
 But, shortly for to speken of this thyng, 985
 With Creon, which that was of Thebès kyng,
 He faught, and slough hym manly as a knyght,
 In pleyñ bataille, and putte the folk to flyght,
 And by assaut he wan the citee after, 989
 And rente adoun bothe wall and sparre and rafter
 And to the ladyes he restored agayn
 The bonés of hir housbondes that weren slayn,
 To doon obsequies as was tho the gyse.
 But it were al to longe for to devyse

974. *rit*, rideth.

977. *the feeldes*, the heraldic
 fields or ground of his
 banner.

979. *y-bete*, stamped.

988. *in pleyñ bataille*, in open
 fight.

992. *housbondes*, so EH, rest
freñdes.

993. *obsequies*, H *exequies*.
tho, then.
gyse, fashion.

The greté clamour and the waymentynge 995
 Thát the ladyes made at the brennynge
 Óf the bodies, and the grete honóur
 That Thesëus, the noble conquerour,
 Dooth to the ladyes whan they from hym wente ;
 But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000

Whan that this worthy duc, this Thesëus,
 Hath Creon slayn, and wonné Thebès thus,
 Stille in that feeld he took al nyght his reste,
 And dide with al the contree as hym leste.

To ransake in the taas of bodyes dede, 1005
 Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
 The pilours diden bisynesse and cure
 After the bataille and disconfiture.

. And so bifel that in the taas they founde, 1009
 . Thurgh-girt with many a grevous, bloody wounde,
 . Two yongé knyghtès, liggyng by and by,
 Bothe in oon armès, wrought ful richely,
 Of whichè two Arcita highte that oon,
 And that oother knyght highte Palamon.
 Nat fully quyke, ne fully dede they were, 1015

But by here cote-armures and by hir gere
 The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
 As they that weren of the blood roial
 Of Thebès, and of sustren two y-born.

Out of the taas the pilours han hem torn 1020

- | | |
|--|--|
| 995. <i>waymentynge</i> , lamentation. | 1007. <i>pilours</i> , plunderers. |
| 996. <i>That, H which that.</i> | 1010. <i>thurgh - girt</i> , pierced |
| <i>brennyng</i> , burning. | through. |
| 1005. <i>taas</i> , heap. | 1011. <i>liggyng by and by</i> , lying |
| 1006. <i>harneys</i> , armour. | close together. |
| <i>wede</i> , clothing. | 1016. <i>gere</i> , weapons. |

And han hem caried softe unto the tente
 Of Theseus, and ful sooné he hem sente
 To Atthenès to dwellen in prisoun
 Perpetuelly, he noldé no raunsoun.
 And whan this worthy duc hath thus y-don, 1025
 He took his hoost and hoom he rood anon,
 With laurer crownéd as a conqueróur ;
 And ther he lyveth in joye and in honóur
 Terme of his lyve ; what nedeth wordès mo ?
 And in a tour, in angwissh and in wo, 1030
 This Palamon and his felawe Arcite
 For everemoore, ther may no gold hem quite.

This passeth yeer by yeer and day by day,
 Till it fil onés, in a morwe of May,
 That Emelye, that fairer was to sene 1035
 Than is the lylie upon his stalké grene,
 And fressher than the May with flourés newe,—
 For with the rosé colour stroof hire hewe,
 I noot which was the fyner of hem two,—
 Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, 1040
 She was arisen and al redy dight :
 For May wole have no slogardrie a nyght,
 The sesoun priketh every gentil herte
 And maketh hym out of his slepe to sterte,
 And seith, " Arys, and do thyn óbservaunce." 1045
 This makéd Emelye have rémembráunce

1024. *nolde no raunsoun*, would not take any ransom.

1027. *laurer*, laurel.

1029. *Terme of his lyve*, the remainder of his life.

1029. *his*, om. E².

1032. *quite*, redeem.

1039. *noot*, know not.

1040. *wone*, wont.

1041. *dight*, dressed.

To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
 Y-clothéd was she fresshe, for to devyse ;
 Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse
 Bihynde hir bak a yerdé long, I gesse ; 1050
 And in the gardyn at the sonne up-riste,
 She walketh up and doun, and as hire liste
 She gadereth flourés, party white and rede,
 . To make a subtil gerland for hire hede,
 . And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong. 1055
 The greté tour that was so thikke and stroong,
 Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun
 (Ther as the knyghtés weren in prisoun,
 Of whiche I toldé yow and tellen shal),
 Was evene joynant to the gardyn wal, 1060
 Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyynge.
 Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morwenynge,
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
 As was his wone, bi leve of his gaylér,
 Was risen, and roméd in a chambre an heigh, 1065
 In which he al the noble citee seigh,
 And eek the gardyn ful of braunches grene,
 Ther as this fresshé Emelye the sheene
 Was in hire walk and roméd up and doun.
 This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun, 1070

1049. *broyded*, braided.1051. *the sonne up-riste*, the sun's uprising.1052. *as hire liste*, as pleased her.1054. *subtil*, cunningly devised.1062. *morwenynge*, morning.1063. *Palamon*, E *this Palamon*.1064. *wone*, wont.1066. *seigh*, saw.1068. *sheene*, beautiful.

Goth in the chambré romynge to and fro,
 And to hymself compleynynge of his wo ;
 That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, "allas !"
 And so bifel, by áventure or cas,
 · That thurgh a wyndow, thikke of many a barre 1075
 · Of iren, greet and square as any sparre,
 He cast his eyen upon Emelya,
 And therwithal he bleynte and cridé, "A !"
 As though he stongen were unto the herte.
 And with that cry Arcite anon up sterte, 1080
 And seyde, "Cosyn myn, what eyleth thee
 That art so pale and deedly on to see ?
 Why cridestow ? who hath thee doon offence ?
 For Goddés love, taak al in pacience
 Oure prisoun, for it may noon oother be ; 1085
 Fortune hath geven us this adversitee.
 Som wikke aspéct or disposicioun
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
 Hath geven us this, although we hadde it sworn ;
 So stood the hevene whan that we were born ; 1090
 We moste endure : this is the short and playn."
 This Palamon answerde, and seyde agayn,
 "Cosyn, for sothe of this opinioun
 Thow hast a veyn ymaginacioun ;
 This prison causéd me nat for to crye, 1095
 | But I was hurt right now thurghout myn eye

1074. *aventure or cas*, hazard
or chance.

1078. *bleynte*, blenched.

1088. *Saturne*, cp. *infra*, 2452 *sqq.*

1091. *endure*, so E, rest *endure*
it, some omitting *the*
before *short*.

| Into myn herte, that wol my bané be.
 The fairnesse of that lady that I see
 Yond in the gardyn romen to and fro
 Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100
 I noot wher she be womman or goddesse,
 But Venus is it, soothly as I gesse."
 And therwithal on kneës down he fil,
 And seyde : "Venus, if it be thy wil
 Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure 1105
 Bifore me, sorweful, wrecché créature,
 Out of this prisoun helpe that we may scapen.
 And if so be my destynnee be shapen,
 By eterné word, to dyen in prisoun,
 Of our lynage have som compassioun, 1110
 That is so lowe y-brought by tirannye."

And with that word Arcité gan espye
 Wher as this lady roméd to and fro,
 And with that sighte hir beautee hurte hym so,
 | That if that Palamon was wounded sore, 1115
 | Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or moore ;
 And with a sigh he seyde pitously :
 "The fressshé beautee sleeth me sodeynly
 Of hire that rometh in the yonder place,
 And but I have hir mercy and hir grace, 1120
 That I may seen hire atté leesté weye,
 I nam but deed ; ther is namoore to seye."

This Palamon, whan he tho wordés herde,

1101. *noot wher*, know not 1122. *nam but*, am only.

whether.

is, H⁶ *nys*.

1103. *fil*, fell.

1115. *was*, om. E in error.

1123. *tho*, those.

Dispitously he looked and answerde,
 "Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?" 1125
 "Nay," quod Arcite, "in earnest, by my
 fey!

God helpe me so, me list ful yvele pleye."

This Palamon gan knytte his browés tweye,
 "It nere," quod he, "to thee no greet honóur,
 For to be fals, ne for to be traitóur 1130
 To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother
 Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til oother,
 That nevere for to dyen in the peyne,
 Til that deeth departé shal us tweyne,
 Neither of us in love to hyndré oother, 1135
 Ne in noon oother cas, my leevé brother,
 But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
 In every cas, as I shal forthren thee.
 This was thyn ooth, and myn also certeyn ;
 I woot right wel thou darst it nat withseyn. 1140
 Thus artow of my conseil, out of doute :
 And now thow woldest falsly been aboute
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
 And evere shal, til that myn herté sterve.
 Nay certès, false Arcite, thow shalt nat so ; 1145
 I loved hire first, and toldé thee my wo

1125. *seistow*, sayest thou.

1127. *me list ful yvele pleye*,
 it pleases me ill to play.

1132. *til*, H⁴ *to*.

1133. *for to dyen in the peyne*,
 not to avoid death by
 torture.

1134. *Til that deeth*, so
 EH³, Hengwrt⁴ *the*
deeth.

departe, sunder.

1144. *sterve*, die.

1145. *Nay*, H⁶ *now*.

As to my conseil, and my brother sworn
 To forthré me, as I have toold biforn.
 For which thou art y-bounden as a knyght
 To helpen me, if it lay in thy myght, 1150
 Or ellès artow fals, I dar wel seyn."

This Arcité ful proudly spak ageyn ;
 "Thow shalt," quod he, "be rather fals than I,
 And thou art fals, I telle thee, outrély,
 For *par amour* I loved hire first er thow. 1155
 What wiltow seyn ? thou wistest nat yet now
 Wheither she be a womman or goddesse !
 Thyn is affeccióun of hoolynesse,
 And myn is love as to a creäture,
 For which I toldè thee myn aventure 1160
 As to my cosyn and my brother sworn.
 I posè that thow lovedest hire biforn,
 Wostow nat wel the oldè clerkès sawe,
 That *who shal geve a love a lawe* ;
Love is a gretter lawè, by my pan, 1165
Than may be geve of any erthely man ?

1147. *and my brother*, so Hengwrt⁴; E², *and to myn brother*; H, *and to brother*.

For *conseil* Lansdowne MS. reads *cosin*, cp. l. 1161.

1153. *Thow shalt be*, you are necessarily, *i.e.* the facts make you.

1154. *And*, H⁵ *but*. *outrély*, utterly.

1162. *pose*, put the case.

1163. *Wostow*, knowest thou. *olde clerkes sawe*, the proverb is found in Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, lib. iii. met. 12, translated by Chaucer: "But what is he that may geve a lawe to lovers? Love is a gretter lawe and a strengere to hymself than any lawe that men may geven." *of*, H⁶ *to*.

1165. *pan*, brain-pan, skull.

And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broken al day for love in ech degree.

A man moot nedés love, maugree his heed ;
He may nat flee it, thogh he sholde be deed, 1170
Al be she mayde, or wydwe, or ellés wyf ;

And eek it is nat likly al thy lyf
To stonden in hir grace, namoore shal I ;
For wel thou woost, thyselfen verrailly,
That thou and I be dampnéd to prisoun 1175
Perpetuelly, us gayneth no raunsoun.

We stryven as dide the houndés for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon ;
Ther cam a kyte, whil that they weren so wrothe,
And baar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe ; 1180

And therefore, at the kyngés court, my brother,
Éch man for hymself, ther is noon oother.
Love, if thee list, for I love and ay shal,
And soothly, leevé brother, this is al.

Heere in this prisoun mooté we endure 1185
And everich of us take his áventure."

Greet was the strif, and long, bitwix hem tweye,
If that I haddé leyser for to seye ;
But to theeffect. It happéd on a day,—
To telle it yow as shortly as I may,— 1190
A worthy duc, that highte Perothëus,
That felawe was unto duc Thesëus,

1168. *degree*, rank of life.

1173. *To stonden*, i.e. that you shall stand.

1179. *that*, om. E.
so, om. H.

1180. *boon*, bone.

1189. *theeffect*, the upshot.

1192. *unto*, so Hengwrt⁵ ; E,
to ; H, to the.

Syn thilké day that they were children lite,
 Was come to Atthenes, his felawe to visite,
 And for to pleye, as he was wont to do ; 1195
 For in this world he lovéd no man so,
 And he loved hym als tendrely agayn.
 So wel they lovede, as oldé bookés sayn,
 That whan that oon was deed, soothly to telle,
 His felawe wente and soughte hym down in
 helle,— 1200

But of that storie list me nat to write.

Duc Perothëus lovéd wel Arcite,
 And hadde hym knowe at Thebés yeer by yere ;
 And finally, at réquest and preyére
 Of Perothëus, withouten any raunsoun, 1205
 Duc Thesëus hym leet out of prisoun
 Frely to goon wher that hym liste over-al,
 In swich a gyse as I you tellen shal.

This was the forward, pleylnly for tendite,
 Bitwixen Thesëus and hym Arcite ; 1210
 That if so were that Arcite were y-founde,
 Evere in his lif, by day or nyght, o stounde,
 In any contree of this Thesëus,
 And he were caught, it was acorded thus,

1193. *lite*, little. Chaucer is out here in his mythology, for Pirithous, King of Thessaly, was originally the enemy of Theseus, and invaded Attica.

1200. Chaucer takes this from the *Roman de la Rose*. According to the original

legend Theseus and Pirithous visited Hell, when the latter was minded to carry off its queen, Proserpina.

1208. *gyse*, manner.

1209. *forward*, agreement. *tendite*, to endite.

1212. *o stounde*, one moment ; o, III ; rest *or*.

· That with a swerd he sholdé lese his heed : 1215
 Ther nas noon oother remedie, ne reed,
 But taketh his leve and homward he him spedde :
 Lat hym be war, his nekké lith to wedde.

How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite !
 The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herté smyte ; 1220
 He wepeth, wayleth, crieth pitously ;
 To sleen hymself he waiteth prively.

He seyde, " Allas that day that I was born !
 Now is my prisoun worsé than biforn ;
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle, 1225
 Nat in my purgatorie, but in helle.

Allas that evere knew I Perothëus !
 For ellës hadde I dwelled with Thesëus
 Y-fetered in his prisoun everemo.
 Thanne hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo, 1230
 Oonly the sighte of hire whom that I serve,—
 Though that I nevere hir gracé may deserve,—
 Wolde han suffised right ynough for me.

O deeré cosyn Palamon," quod he,
 " Thyn is the victorie of this aventure ! 1235
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure,—

In prisoun ? certés nay, but in paradys !
 Wel hath Fortúne y-turned thee the dys,
 That hast the sighte of hire and I thabsence.

For possible is, syn thou hast hire presence, 1240

1215. *lese*, lose.

1216. *reed*, counsel, plan.

1217. *taketh*, H *took*.

1218. *wedde* is here a dative ;
to wedde, in pledge.

1223. *I*, E *he*.

1225. *Now is me shape*, now is
 it destined for me.

1236. *dure*, abide.

1238. *y-turned thee the dys*,
 cast the dice for thee.

And art a knyght, a worthy and an able,
 That by som cas, syn Fortune is chaungeable,
 Thow maist to thy desir some tyme atteyne,
 But I, that am exilèd and bareyne
 Of allé grace, and in so greet dispeir, 1245
 That ther nys erthé, water, fir, ne eir,
 Ne creäture, that of hem makéd is,
 That may me heele, or doon confort in this—
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;
 Farwel, my lif, my lust and my gladnesse! 1250
 " Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune
 Of purvieaunce of God, or of Fortúne,
 That geveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
 Wel better than they kan hem self devyse?
 Som man desireth for to han richésse, 1255
 That cause is of his moerdre, or greet siknesse;
 And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,
 That in his hous is of his meynnee slayn.
 Infinite harmés been in this mateere,
 We witen nat what thing we preyen heere. 1260
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.
 A dronké man woot wel he hath an hous,
 But he noot which the righté wey is thider,
 And to a dronké man the wey is slider;
 And ~~certés in this world so faren we,—~~ 1265
 We seken faste after felicitee,

1242. *by*, om. E.1248. *hee*, H⁶ *helpe*.1249. *oughte I*, am I bound to. *wanhope*, despair.1251. *pleynen*, complain.1252. *purvieaunce*, providence.1258. *meynnee*, household.1260. *thing*, om. E.1262. *that after wel*, add E².1263. *noot*, knows not.1264. *slider*, slippery.

But we goon wrong ful often trewely.
 Thus may we seyén alle, and namely I,
 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun
 That if I myghte escapen from prisoun, 1270
 Thanne hadde I been in joye and perfit heele,
 Ther now I am exiléd fro my wele.
 Syn that I may nat seen you, Emelye,
 I nam but deed, there nys no remedye."

Upon that oother syde, Palamon, 1275
 Whan that he wiste Arcité was agon,
 Swich sorwe he maketh that the greté tour
 Resounéd of his youlyng and clamour ;
 The purè fettres on his shynés grete
 Weren of his bittre, salté teerés wete. 1280

"Allas !" quod he, "Arcita, cosyn myn,
 Of al oure strif, God woot, the fruyt is thyn ;
 Thow walkest now in Thebés at thy large,
 And of my wo thow gevest litel charge.
 Thou mayst, syn thou hast wysdom and man-
 hede, 1285

Assemblen alle the folk of oure kynrede,
 And make a werre so sharpe on this citee,
 That by som áventure, or som tretee,
 Thow mayst have hire to lady and to wyf,
 For whom that I moste nedés lese my lyf. 1290
 For as by wey of possibilitee,
 Sith thou art at thy large, of prisoun free,

1268. *seyen*, E⁴ *seyn*.1269. *wende*, thought.1272. *Ther*, E *That*.1278. *Resouned*, H⁶ *resouneth*.1279. *purs*, very.

And art a lord, greet is thyn ávauntage,
 Moore than is myn that sterve here in a cage ;
 For I moot wepe and waylè while I lyve, 1295
 With al the wo that prison may me geve,
 And eek with peyne that love me geveth also,
 That doubleth al my torment and my wo."

Therwith the fyr of jalousie up-sterde
Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte 1300
So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
 The boxtree, or the asshe, dede and colde.

Thanne seyde he, "O crueel goddes that govérne
 This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,
 And writen in the table of atthamaunt 1305
 Your parlément and youre eterné graunt,
 What is mankyndé moore unto you holde
 Than is the sheepe that rouketh in the folde ?
 For slayn is man, right as another beest,
 And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest, 1310
 And hath siknesse and greet adversitee,
 And ofté tymés gitélees, *pardee*.

"What governance is in this prescience,
 That gitélees tormenteth innocence ?
 And yet encresseth this al my penaunce, 1315
 That man is bounden to his óbservaunce
 For Goddés sake to letten of his wille,
 Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille ;

1300. *hente*, seized.1301. *woodly*, madly.1303. *goddes*, E *gooddes*.1305. *atthamaunt*, adamant.1306. *parlement*, parliament,
deliberation.*graunt*, decree.1308. *rouketh*, huddles.1317. *letten of*, forego.

And whan a beest is deed he hath no peyne, 1319
 But after his deeth man moot wepe and pleyne,
 Though in this world he havè care and wo,—
 Withouten doutè it may stonden so.

The answare of this I letè to dyvynys,
 But well I woot that in this world greet pyne ys.
 Allas ! I se a serpent or a theef, 1325
 That many a trewè man hath doon mescheef,
 Goon at his large, and where hym list may turne ;
 But I moot been in prisoun thurgh Saturne,
 And eek thurgh Juno, jalous and eek wood,
 That hath destroyéd wel ny al the blood 1330
 Of Thebès with hise wastè wallès wyde ;
 And Venus sleeth me on that oother syde
 For jalousie and fere of hym Arcite."

Now wol I stynte of Palamon a lite
 And lete hym in his prisoun stillè dwelle, 1335
 And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.

The sommer passeth, and the nyghtès longe
 Encressen double wise the peynès stronge
 Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.
 I noot which hath the wofuller mester ; 1340
 For shortly for to seyn this Palamoun
 Perpetuelly is dampnéd to prisoun,

1320. *But after his deeth man,*
 etc., so E⁴, throwing a
 stress, which accords
 well with the sense, on
his; H³ more smoothly,
But man after his deeth
 etc.

1323. *I lete*, E⁶ *lete I*, spoiling
 the accents throughout
 the line.

1329. *wood*, mad.

1337. *sommer*, E *sonne*.

1340. *mester*, need.

In cheynés and in fettres to been deed,
 And Arcite is exiled upon his heed
 For evere mo, as out of that contree, 1345
 Ne nevere mo he shal his lady see.

Yow loveres, axe I now this questioun,
 Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?
 That oon may seen his lady day by day,
 Buft in prison he moot dwelle alway; 1350
~~That~~ oother wher hym list may ride or go,
~~But seen his lady shal he nevere mo.~~
 Now demeth as yow listé, ye that kan,
 For I wol tellé forth as I bigan.

PART II.

Whan that Arcite to Thebés comen was, 1355
 Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde, "Allas!"
 For seen his lady shal he nevere mo.
 And, shortly to concluden al his wo,
 So muché sorwe hadde nevere créature
 That is or shal whil that the world may dure. 1360
 His slepe, his mete, his drynke, is hym biraft,
 That lene he wexe and drye as is a shaft;
 His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde,
 His hewé falow and pale as asshe colde,
 And solitarie he was and evere allone, 1365
 And waillynge al the nyght makynge his mone:

1344. *upon his heed*, on pain 1356. *swelte*, swooned.
 of losing his head. 1362. *wexe*, E² *wexeth*.
 1347. *Yow*, E *now*, badly. 1364. *falow*, faded.
 1353. *demeth*, judge.

And if he herdé song or instrument
 Thanne wolde he wepe, he myghté nat be stent.
 So feble eek were hise spiritz and so lowe,
 And chaungéd so that no man koudé knowe 1370
 His spechê nor his voys, though men it herde :
 And in his geere for al the world he ferde,
 Nat oonly like the loveris maladye
 Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye,
 Engendred of humóur maléncolik, 1375
 Biforn, in his owene cellé fantastik.
 And, shortly, turnéd was al up-so-doun
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun
 Of hym, this woful love-re daun Arcite.
 What sholde I al day of his wo endite? 1380
 Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
 This crueel torment and this peyne and woo,
 At Thebés, in his contree, as I seyde,
 Upon a nyght in sleepe as he hym leyde,
 Hym thoughte how that the wyngéd god Mercúrie
 Biforn hym stood and bad hym to be murie ; 1386
 His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte,
 An hat he werede upon hise heris brighte.

1372. *geere*, behaviour.
ferde, acted.

1374. *Hereos*, Eros, Love.
manye, mania.

1376. *Biforn*, in his owene
celle fantastik; in is
 from H only; *owene*
 from E³ only. Accord-
 ing to medieval theory
 Mania was begotten in

the front cell of the
 head which was appro-
 priated to the imagina-
 tion.

1379. *daun*, dominus, lord.

1387. *yerde*, wand, Mercury's
caduceus.

1388. *upon*, E *up*.
heris, hairs.

Arrayed was this god, as he took keepe,
 As he was whan that Argus took his sleepe, 1390
 And seyde hym thus, "To Atthénès shaltou wende,
 Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende."
 And with that word Arcité wook and sterte,—
 "Now trewely, hou sooré that me smerte,"
 Quod he, "to Atthénès right now wol I fare, 1395
 Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare,
 To se my lady that I love and serve;
 In hire presence I recché nat to sterve."

And with that word he caughte a greet miróur
 And saugh that chaungéd was al his colour 1400
 And saugh his visage al in another kynde;
 And right anon it ran hym in his mynde
 That sith his facé was so disfigúred
 Of maladye the which he hadde endured,
 He myghté wel, if that he bar hym lowe, 1405
 Lyve in Atthénès everemore unknowe,
 And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
 And right anon he chaungéd his array
 And cladde hym as a pouré laborer,
 And al allone,—save oonly a squiér 1410
 That knew his privètee and al his cas,
 Which was disguised pourely as he was,—
 To Atthénès is he goon the nexté way,
 And to the court he wente upon a day,

1389. *he*, E I.

lulled him with music
and slew him.

1390. *Argus*, the hundred-eyed
guardian of Io. Mercury

1398. *I recche nat to sterve*,
care not whether I die.

And at the gate he profreth his servyse 1415
 To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
 And, shortly of this matere for to seyn,
 He fil in office with a chamberleyn
 The which that dwellynge was with Emelye,
 For he was wys and koude soone espye 1420
 Of every servaunt which that serveth here.
 Wel koude he hewen wode and water bere,
 For he was yong, and myghty for the nones,
 And therto he was long and big of bones,
 To doon that any wight kan hym devyse. 1425
 A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte,
 And Philostrate he seyde that he highte.
 But half so wel biloved a man as he
 Ne was ther nevere in court of his degree ; 1430
 He was so gentil of his condicioun
 That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
 They seyden that it were a charitee
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
 And putten hym in worshipful servyse, 1435
 Ther as he myghte his vertu exercise.
 And thus withinne a while his name is spronge,
 Bothe of hise dedes and his goodé tonge,

1416. *drugge*, drudge.1421. *serveth*, H *served*.1424. *long*, EH³; Hengwrt⁴, *strong*.1428. *Philostrate*: in the *Teseide* Arcite takes the name of Pentheo. The

name Philostrate was probably suggested to Chaucer by Boccaccio's poem *Filostrato*, the original of *Troilus* and *Cressida*.

1431. *his*, EH; rest omit.

That Thesëus hath taken hym so neer,
 That of his chambre he made hym a squiér, 1440
 And ~~gaf him gold~~ to mayntene his degree ;
 And eek men broghte hym out of his contree,
 From yeer to yeer, ful pryvely, his rente ;
 But honestly and slyly he it spente
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde. 1445
 And thre yeer in this wise his lif he ladde
 And bar hym so in pees, and eek in werre,
 Ther was no man that Thesëus hath derre.
 And in this blissé lete I now Arcite
 And speke I wole of Palamon a lite. 1450

In derknesse and horrible and strong prison
 Thise seven yeer hath seten Palamon.
 Forpynéd, what for wo and for distresse.
 Who feeleth double soor and hevynesse
 But Palamon, that love destreyneth so 1455
 That wood out of his wit he goth for wo ?
 And eek ther-to he is a prisoner
 Perpetuelly, noight only for a yer.

Who koudé ryme in Englyssh proprely
 His martirdom ? for sothe it am nat I ; 1460
 Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

It fel that in the seventhe yer in May,
 The thriddé nyght, as oldé bookés seyn
 That al this storie tellen mooré pleyn,

1444. *slyly*, cleverly.1448. *derre*, dearer.1450. *lite*, little.1453. *Forpyned*, tormented.1454. *soor*, E^s ; H³, *sorwe*.
and, om. E.1455. *destreyneth*, vexeth.1456. *wood*, mad.

Were it by aventure or destynee,— 1465

As whan a thyng is shapen it shal be,—

That soone after the mydnyght, Palamoun,

By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun

And fleeth the citee faste as he may go,

For he hade geve his gayler drynkè so 1470

Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,

Of nercotikes, and opie of Thebès fyn,

That al that nyght, thogh that men wolde him shake,

The gayler sleepe, he myghtè nat awake ;

And thus he fleeth, as faste as evere he may. 1475

The nyght was short and fastè by the day,

That nedès-cost he moot hymselfen hyde,

And til a grovè fastè ther bisyde,

With dredeful foot, thanne stalketh Palamoun.

For, shortly, this was his opinioun, 1480

That in that grove he wolde hym hyde al day,

And in the nyght thanne wolde he take his way

To Thebès-ward, his freendès for to preye

On Thesëus to helpe him to werreye ;

And, shortly, outhur he woldè lese his lif 1485

Or wynnen Emelye unto his wyf.

This is theeffect and his ententè pleyn.

Now wol I turnè to Arcite ageyn,

1471. *clarree*, a mixture of wine and spices.

1472. *opie*, opium ; there is a note in the Ellesmere MS. *opium Thebaicum*, but the *Thebes* referred to is probably the Egyp-

tian, not the Greek one.

1472. For first of *H*⁶ read *with*.

1477. *nedes-cost*, of necessity.

1479. *dredeful*, full of fear.

1488. *to*, *H*⁴ *unto*.

That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
Til that Fortúne had broght him in the snare. 1490

The bisy larké, messenger of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwé gray,
And firy Phebus riseth up so brighte
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with hise stremés dryeth in the greves 1495

The silver dropés, hangynge on the leves.
And Arcita, that is in the court roiál
With Thesëus, his squier principal,
Is risen, and looketh on the myrie day ;
And for to doon his óbservaunce to May, 1500

Remembrynge on the poynt of his desir,
He on a courser, stertyng as the fir,
Is riden into the feeldés hym to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye ;
And to the grove of which that I yow tolde, 1505

By áventure, his wey he gan to holde,
| To maken hym a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodébynde, or hawethorn leves,
And loude he song ageyn the sonné shene :
“ Máy, with alle thy floures and thy grene, 1510

Wélcome be thou, fairé, fressshé May,
In hope that I som grené geté may.”

1494. *That al the orient laugheth*: Dante, *Purg.* i. 20, “faceva tutto rider l' oriente.” (Skeat.)
1495. *greves*, groves.
1500. *his observaunce to May*, cp. l. 1045.

1502. *a*, H⁴ *his*.
stertyng, E³ *startlynge*.
1509. *ageyn*, against, towards.
shene, bright.
1512. *In*, Corpus³ l.

And from his courser with a lusty herte
 Into a grove ful hastily he sterte,
 And in a path he rometh up and doun, 1515
 Ther as by aventure this Palamoun
 Was in a bussh, that no man myghte hym se,
 For soore aferèd of his deeth was he.
 No thyng ne knew he that it was Arcite,—
 God woot he wolde have trowèd it ful lite ; 1520
 But sooth is seyð, gon sithen many yeres,
 That feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.
 It is ful fair a man to bere hym evene,
 For al day meeteth men at unset stevene.
 Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe 1525
 That was so ny to herkennen al his sawe,
 For in the bussh he sitteth now ful stille.

Whan that Arcite hadde romèd al his fille,
 And songen al the roundel lustily,
 Into a studie he fil al sodeynly, 1530
 As doon thise lovers in hir queynté geres,—
 Now in the cropè, now doun in the breres,
 Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.
 Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
 Nów it shyneth, now it reyneth faste, 1535
 Right so kan geery Venus overcaste
 The hertès of hir folk ; right as hir day

1518. *afered . . . was*, E *aferd*
. . . thanne was, wrongly.

1522. *That feeld hath eyen* :
 "Campus habet lumen
 et habet nemus auris
 acumen."

1524. *unset stevene*, unappointed time.

1531. *geres*, manners.

1532. *crope*, top.

1536. *kan*, H⁴ *gan*.
geery, changeful.

Is gereful, right so chaungeth she array,—
 Selde is the Friday al the wowke y-like.

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to sike, 1540
 And sette hym doun withouten any moore :
 “Allas,” quod he, “that day that I was bore !
 How longé, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
 Woltow werreyen Thebès the citee ?

Allas, y-brought is to confusioun 1545

The blood roiál of Cadme and Amphioun,—
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firsté man
 That Thebès bulte or first the toun bigan,
 And of the citee first was crounéd kyng.

Of his lynage am I, and his ofspryng 1550

By verray ligne, as of the stok roiál ;

And now I am so caytyf and so thral,

That he that is my mortal enemy,

I serve hym as his squier pourély.

And yet dooth Juno me wel mooré shame, 1555

For I dar noght biknowe myn owene name,

But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,

Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.

Allas, thou fellé Mars ! alas, Juno !

Thus hath youre ire oure kynrede al fordo, 1560

Save oonly me, and wrecched Palamoun,

That Thesëus martireth in prisoun.

And over al this, to sleen me outrely,

Love hath his firy dart so brennyngly

1539. *wowke*, week.

1540. *sike*, sigh.

1548. *bulte*, built.

1556. *biknowe*, confess.

1564. *brennyngly*, burningly.

Y-stikéd thurgh my trewé, careful herte, 1565
 That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
 Ye sleen me with youre eyén, Emelye !
 Ye been the causé wherfore that I dye !
 Of al the remenant of myn oother care
 Ne sette I nat the montance of a tare, 1570
 So that I koude doon aught to youre plesaunce."
 And with that word he fil down in a traunce
 A longé tyme, and afterward up-sterde.

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
 He felte a coold swerd sodeynliché glyde, 1575
 For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.
 And whan that he had herd Arcités tale,
 As he were wood, with facé deed and pale,
 He stirte hym up out of the buskés thikke,
 And seide, "Arcité, falsé traytour wikke ! 1580
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
 And art my blood and to my conseil sworn,
 As I ful ofte have seyde thee heer-biforn,
 And hast byjapéd heere duc Thesëus, 1585
 And falsly chaungéd hast thy namé thus ;
 I wol be deed, or ellés thou shalt dye ;
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,

1566. *sherte*, shirt ; cp. *Legend of Good Women*, l. 2626, and *Troilus*, 734 :

"O fatal sustren whiche or
 any clothe
 Me shapen was, my destinee
 me spunne."

1570. *montance*, sum, value.

1573. *afterward*, so H ; *after he*, E ; *afterward he*, Heng⁴.

1579. *buskes*, bushes.

1581. *hent*, caught.

1584. *seyd*, H⁸ *told*.

1585. *byjaped*, befooled.

But I wol love hire oonly, and namo,
 For I am Palamon, thy mortal foo, 1590
 And though that I no wepene have in this place,
 But out of prison am astert by grace,
 I dredè noght, that outhur thou shalt dye,
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
 Chees which thou wolt, for thou shalt nat asterte !”

This Arcité, with ful despitous herte, 1596
 Whan he hym knew, and hadde his talè herd,
 As fiers as leoun pullèd out his swerd,
 And seyde thus, “ By God that sit above,
 Nere it that thou art sik and wood for love, 1600
 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
 Thou sholdest nevere out of this grové pace,
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond,
 For I defye the seurete and the bond
 Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee.
 What, verray fool, thyng wel that love is fre ! 1606
 And I wol love hire mawgree al thy myght.
 But for as muche thou art a worthy knyght,
 And wilnest to darreyne hire by bataille,
 Have heer my trouthe, tomorwe I wol nat faile,
 Withoutè wityng of any oother wight, 1611
 That heere I wol be founden as a knyght,
 And bryngen harneys right ynough for thee,
 And chese the beste and leve the worste for me ;

1589. *namo*, no more.1592. *astert*, escaped.1595. *for*, F⁸ *or*.1598. *his*, H⁵ *a*.1599. *sit*, sitteth.1607. *mawgree*, despite.1609. *darreyne*, contest.1611. *wityng*, knowledge.

And mete and drynké this nyght wol I brynge 1615
 Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy beddyng ;
 And if so be that thou my lady wynne
 And sle me in this wode ther I am inne,
 Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me."

This Palamon answerde, "I graunte it thee."
 And thus they been departed til amorwe, 1621
 Whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.

O Cupide, out of allé charitee !
 O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee !
 Ful sooth is seyde that lovè ne lordshipe 1625
 Wol noght, hir thankès, have no felaweshipe.
 Wel fynden that Arcite and Palamoun !

Arcite is riden anon unto the toun,
 And on the morwe, er it were dayès light,
 Ful prively two harneys hath he dight, 1630
 Bothe suffisaunt and meté to darreyne
 The bataille in the feeld betwix hem tweyne ;
 And on his hors, allone as he was born,
 He carieth al the harneys hym biforn :
 And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set, 1635
 This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
 To chaungen gan the colour in hir face,
 Right as the hunters in the regne of Trace,
 That stondeth at the gappè with a spere,
 Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere, 1640

1621. *departed*, separated.

1622. *to borwe*, in pledge.

1626. *hir thankes*, willingly.

1637. *To*, H *Tho*.

1638. *regne*, kingdom.

1640. *or*, E *and*.

And hereth hym come russhyng in the greves,
 And breketh both bowes and the leves,
 And thynketh, "Heere cometh my mortal enemy,
 With-outé faile he moot be deed or I ;
 For outhur I moot sleen hym at the gappe, 1645
 Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe : "
 So ferden they in chaungyng of hir hewe,
 As fer as everich of hem oother knewe.

Ther nas no "Good day," ne no saluyng,
 But streight, withouten word or rehersyng, 1650
 Everich of hem heelpé for to armen oother,
 As frendly as he were his owene brother ;
 And after that, with sharpé sperés stronge,
 They foynen ech at oother wonder longe.
 Thou myghtest wené that this Palamoun, 1655
 In his fightyng were a wood leoun,
 And as a crueel tigre was Arcite :
 As wildé borés gonné they to smyte,
 That frothen whit as foom for iré wood,—
 Up to the ancleé foghte they in hir blood. 1660

And in this wise I lete hem fightyng dwelle,
 And forth I wole of Thesëus yow telle.

The Destinee, ministré general,
 That executeth in the world over al,

1642. *bowes*, boughs ; *breketh*,
 of course, refers to the
 beast, though the tense
 is attracted by *hereth*
 and *thynketh*.

1647. *ferden*, behaved.

1651. *for*, om. H².

1654. *foynen*, thrust.

1656. *wood*, mad.
as a for a, H.

1658. *gonne*, began.

The purveiaunce that God hath seyn biforn, 1665

So strong it is that though the world had sworn

The contrarie of a thyng by ye or nay,

• Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day

• That falleth nat eft withinne a thousand yeere.

For certainly oure appetitès heere, 1670

Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,

Al is this reulèd by the sighte above.

 This mene I now by myghty Thesëus,

That for to hunten is so desirús,

And namely at the gretè hert in May, 1675

That in his bed ther daweth hym no day

That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde

With hunte and horne, and houndès hym bisyde.

For in his huntynge hath he swich delit,

That it is al his joye and appetit 1680

To been hymself the gretè hertès bane,

For after Mars he serveth now Dyane.

 Cleer was the day, as I have toold er this,

And Thesëus, with allè joye and blis,

With his Ypolita, the fairè queene, 1685

And Emelyë, clothèd al in grene,

On huntynge be they riden roially;

And to the grove that stood ful fastè by,

In which ther was an hert, as men hym tolde,

Duc Thesëus the streightè wey hath holde; 1690

And to the launde he rideth hym ful right,—

For thider was the hert wont have his flight,—

1665. *purveiaunce*, providence.

1669. *eft*, again.

1678. *hunte*, hunter.

1691. *launde*, a clearing.

And over a brook, and so forth in his weye.
 This duc wol han a cours at hym, or tweye, 1694
 With houndès, swiche as that hym list commaunde.

And whan this duc was come unto the launde
 Under the sonne he looketh, and anon,
 He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
 That foughten breme, as it were borès two.
 The brightè swerdès wenten to and fro 1700
 So hidously, that with the leestè strook
 It semèd as it woldè fille an ook ;

But what they werè no thyng he ne woot.
 | This duc his courser with his sporès smoot,
 And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705
 And pullèd out a swerd, and cridè, "Hoo !
 Namooore, up peyne of lesynge of youre heed !
 By myghty Mars, he shal anon be deed
 That smyteth any strook, that I may seen.

| But telleth me what mystiers men ye been, 1710
 That been so hardy for to fighten heere
 Withouten juge, or oother officere,
 As it were in a lystès roially ? "

This Palamon answerdè hastily
 And seyde, "Sire, what nedeth wordès mo ? 1715
 We have the deeth disservèd bothè two.
 Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
 That been encombred of oure owene lyves,

1695. *that*, om. EH⁴; H³ insert
 to before *commaunde*.

1699. *breeme*, furiously.

1702. *fille*, fell.

1707. *up*, E³ *upon*.
lesynge, losing.

1710. *what mystiers men*, what
 kind of men.

And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne geve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720
But sle me first, for seinté charitee,
But sle my felawe eek as wel as me ;
Or sle hym first, for though thow knowest it lite,
This is thy mortal foo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banysshed on his heed, 1725
For which he hath deserved to be deed ;
For this is he that cam unto thy gate
And seyde that he highté Philostrate ;
Thus hath he japéd thee ful many a yer,
And thou hast makéd hym thy chief squiér ; 1730
And this is he that loveth Emelye ;
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I maké pleynly my confessioun
That I am thilké woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prisoun broken wikkedly. 1735
I am thy mortal foo, and it am I
That loveth so hoote Emelye the brighte
That I wol dyé present in hir sighte.
Therefore I axé deeth and my juwise ;
But sle my felawe in the samé wise, 1740
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.”
This worthy duc answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, “This is a short conclusioun :
Youre owene mouth, by youre confessioun,
Hath dampnéd yow, and I wol it recorde, 1745

1721. *But*, H *And*.1723. *lite*, little.1729. *japed*, cheated.1734. *thilke*, that same.1739. *juwise*, judgment.1745. *recorde*, confirm.

It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde,
 Ye shal be deed, by myghty Mars the rede!"

The queene anon, for verray wommanhede,
 Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
 And alle the ladyes in the compaignye. 1750
 Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
 That evere swich a chauncé sholde falle,
 For gentil men they were, of greet estaat,
 And no thyng but for love was this debaat,—
 And saugh hir bloody woundes wyde and soore 1755
 And allé crieden, bothé lasse and moore,
 "Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle!"
 And on hir baré knees adoun they falle,
 And wolde have kist his feet ther as he stood,
 Til at the laste aslakéd was his mood, 1760
 For pitee renneth soone in gentil herte,
 And though he first for iré quook and sterte,
 He hath considered shortly in a clause
 The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause,
 And although that his ire hir gilt accused, 1765
 Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused,
 And thus he thoghté wel, that every man
 Wol helpe hymself in love, if that he kan,
 And eek deliveré hymself out of prisoun;
 And eek his herté hadde compassioun 1770
 Of wommen, for they wepen evere in oon;
 And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,

1746. *to pyne yow with the corde*,
 put you to torture, *i.e.*
 to extract a confession.

1761. *For pitee*, etc., this beauti-

ful line occurs four times
 in Chaucer.

1762. *quook and sterte*, quaked
 and started.

And softe unto hym-self he seyde, "Fy
 Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,
 But been a leoun bothe in word and dede 1775
 To hem that been in répentance and drede,
 As wel as to a proud despitous man
 That wol maynteyné that he first bigan ;
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
 That in swich cas kan no divisioun, 1780
 But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon."
 And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
 He gan to looken up with eyen lighte,
 And spak thise samé wordés, al on highte.

"The god of love, a *benedicite*, 1785
 How myghty and how greet a lord is he !
 Ageyns his myght ther gayneth none obstácles,
 He may be cleped a god for hise myrácles,
 For he kan maken, at his owene gyse,
 Of everich herte as that hym list divyse. 1790

"Lo heere this Arcite, and this Palamoun,
 That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
 And myghte han lyved in Thebés roially,
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
 And that hir deth lith in my myght also, 1795
 And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
 Y-brought hem hyder, bothé for to dye.
 Now looketh, is nat that an heigh folye ?

"Whó may been a fole, but if he love ?

1780. *kan no divisioun*, knows
 no difference.

1784. *on highte*, aloud.

1787. *gayneth*, avail.

1792. *quitly*, freely.

1795. *lith*, lies.

1799. *Who may*, etc., i.e. your
 lover is your only perfect

Bihoold, for Goddès sake that sit above, 1800
 Se how they blede ! be they noght wel arrayed ?
 Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed
 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse :
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle. 1805
 But this is yet the besté game of alle,
 That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
 Kan hem ther-fore as muché thank as me.
 She woot namoore of al this hooté fare,
 By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare. 1810
 But all moot ben assayéd, hoot and coold ;
 A man moot ben a fool, or yong or oold,—
 I woot it by myself ful yore agon,
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
 And therfore, syn I knowe of lovès peyne, 1815
 And woot hou soore it kan a man distreyne,
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his laas,
 I yow forgeve al hoolly this trespaaas,
 At réqueste of the queene, that kneleth heere,
 And eek of Emelye, my suster deere. 1820
 And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere,
 That nevere mo ye shal my contree dere.
 Ne makè werre upon me, nyght ne day,
 But been my freendès in al that ye may.

fool. The reading of H,
 "who may be a sole if
 that he love," necessitates
 the insertion of *not* after
may.

1808. *kan* . . . *thank*, thanks.

1810. *or*, E³ *of*.

1814. *servant*, lover.

1816. *distreyne*, constrain.

1817. *laas*, snare.

1822. *dere*, hurt.

I yow forgeve this trespas every deel." 1825

And they him sworn his axying, faire and weel,
And hym of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde :—

" To speke of roial lynage and richesse,
Though that she were a queene or a princesse, 1830

Ech of you bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathélees,—

I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this strif and jalousye,—
Ye woot your self she may nat wedden two 1835

At onés, though ye fighten everemo.

That oon of you, al be hym looth or lief,
He moot go pipen in an yvy leef :

This is to seyn, she may nought havé bothe,
Al be ye never so jalouse ne so wrothe ; 1840

And for-thy, I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destyne

As hym is shape, and herkneth in what wyse ;
Lo heere your ende of that I shal devyse :—

" My wyl is this, for plat conclusioun 1845
Withouten any repplicacioun,—

If that you liketh, take it for the beste,—

That everich of you shal goon where hym leste

1832. *but nathélees*, E repeats
doutelees.

1838. *go*, om. E. The phrase,
equivalent to our *go*
whistle, is used by
Wyclif, "the secular
party may go pipe with
an ivy leaf for any lord-
ship that the clerks will

give them again" (ed.
F. D. Matthew, p. 372).

1839. *nought have*, E⁴ *nat*
now han, where *now* is
absurd.

1841. *for-thy*, therefore.

1845. *plat*, flat.

1846. *repplicacioun*, reply.

Frely, withouten raunson or daunger ;
 And this day fifty wykés, fer ne ner, 1850
 Everich of you shal brynge an hundred knyghtes
 Arméd for lystés up at allé rightes,
 Al redy to darreyne hire by bataille ;
 And this bihote I yow with-outen faille
 Upon my trouthe and as I am a knyght, 1855
 That wheither of yow bothé that hath myght,
 This is to seyn, that wheither he or thow
 May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
 Sleen his contrarie, or out of lystés dryve,
 Him shal I geve Emelya to wyve, 1860
 To whom that Fortune geveth so fair a grace.
 The lystés shal I maken in this place,
 And God so wisly on my soulé rewe
 As I shal evene jugé been, and trewe.
 Ye shul noon oother endé with me maken 1865
 That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken ;
 And if yow thynketh this is weel y-sayd,
 Seyeth youre avys and holdeth you apayd.
 This is youre ende and youre conclusioun."
 Who looketh lightly now but Palamoun ? 1870
 Who spryngeth up for joyé but Arcite ?
 Who kouthé tellé, or who kouthe endite,
 The joyé that is makéd in the place
 Whan Thesëus hath doon so fair a grace ?

1850. *fer ne ner*, no later or
 sooner ; *fifty wykes* are
 of course used here for
 a year, Boccaccio's *un*
anno intero.

1853. *darreyne*, contest.

1854. *bihote*, promise.

1860. *Him*, H ; E⁴, *thanne* ;
*Corpus*³, *that*.

1862. *The*, E *Tho*.

1863. *wisly*, surely.

1868. *apayd*, contented.

But doun on knees wente every maner wight 1875
 And thonken hym with al hir herte and myght ;
 And namely the Thebans often sithe.
 And thus with good hope and with herté blithe
 They taken hir leve, and homward gonne they ride
 To Thebés with hise oldé wallés wyde. 1880

PART III

I trowe men woldé deme it necligence
 If I forgete to tellen the dispence
 Of Thesëus, that gooth so bisily
 To maken up the lystés roially,
 That swich a noble theatre as it was 1885
 I dar wel seyn that in this world there nas.
 • The circuït a mylè was aboute,
 • Walléd of stoon and dychéd al withoute.
 • Round was the shape in manere of compaas,
 • Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas, 1890
 • That whan a man was set on o degree,
 • He letté nat his felawe for to see.
 • Estward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,
 • Westward right swich another in the opposit.
 And, shortly to concluden, swich a place 1895
 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space ;

1877. *namely*, especially.*sithe*, times.1886. *that*, om. E^g.1890. *degrees*, steps.1890. *pas*, paces.1891. *o*, one.1892. *lette*, hindered.

For in the lond ther was no crafty man
 That geometrie or ars-metrik kan,
 Ne portreitour, ne kervere of ymáges,
 That Thesëus ne gaf him mete and wages, 1900
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.
 And, for to doon his ryte and sacrificise,
 He estward hath upon the gate above,
 In worshipe of Venus, goddesse of love,
 Doon make an auter and an oratórie ; 1905
 And westward in the mynde and in memórie
 Of Mars, he makéd hath right swich another,
 That costé largely of gold a fother.
 And northward, in a touret on the wal,
 Of alabastre whit and reed coral, 1910
 An oratorie riché for to see,
 In worshipe of Dyane of chastitee
 Hath Thesëus doon wrought in noble wyse.

But yet hadde I forgeten to devyse
 The noble kervyng and the portreitures, 1915
 The shape, the contenance, and the figures
 That weren in thise oratories thre.

First, in the temple of Venus maystow se,
 Wroght on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
 The broken slepés, and the sikés colde, 1920
 The sacred teeris, and the waymentynge,

1398. *ars-metrik*, arithmetic.

1900. *him*, om. E³; H, *hem*.

1906. *And westward*, etc., text from H; and on the westward in memorie, E⁵; and on the westward side in memorie, Petworth.

1908. *fother*, load.

1920. *sikes*, sighs.

1921. *sacred*, Cambridge MS. *secret*, an attractive reading.

waymentynge, lamenting.

| The firy strokés, and the desiryngé,
 That lovés servauntz in this lyf enduren ;
 The othés that her covenantz assuren.
 | Plesaunce and Hope, Desir, Foolhardynesse, 1925
 Beautee and Youthé, Bauderie, Richesse,
 Charmés and Force, Lesyngés, Flaterye,
 | Despensé, Bisynesse and Jalousye,
 That wered of yelewe gooldés a gerland
 And a cokkow sitynge on hir hand ; 1930
 | Féstes, instrumentz, carólés, daunces,
 Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
 Of love, whiche that I reken, and rekne shal,
 By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
 And mo than I kan make of mencion ; 1935
 | For soothly al the mount of Citheroun,
 Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellynge,
 Was shewed on the wal in portreyngé,
 With al the gardyn and the lustynesse.
 Nat was forgeten the porter Ydelnesse, 1940
 Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
 Ne yet the folye of kyng Salamon,
 Ne yet the greté strengthe of Ercules,
 Thenchautementz of Medea and Circes,

1928. *Despense*, expenditure.

1929. *gooldes*, marigolds.

1930. *cokkow*, cuckoo.

1933. *reken*, Cambridge MS.;
 E, *rekned have*; H⁵,
rekned.

1936. *Citheroun*, Chaucer
 seems to confuse the
 island of *Cythera*, the
 home of Venus, with

Mt. Cithæron, on the
 borders of Attica, sacred
 to Bacchus and the
 Muses.

1940. *the porter Ydelnesse*, cp.
Romaunt of the Rose, ll.
 531-593.

1942. *Ne*, E² and.

1943. *Ne yet*, E² and *eek*, H
ne eek.

Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage, 1945
 The richē Cresus, kaytyf in servage.

Thus may ye seen that Wysdom ne Richesse
 Beautee ne Sleightē, Strengthē, Hardynesse,
 Ne may with Venus holdē champartie,
 For as hir list the world than may she gye. 1950
 Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las
 Til they for wo ful oftē seyde, "Allas!"
 Suffiseth heere ensamples oon or two,
 And though I koudē rekene a thousand mo.

The statue of Venus, glorious for to se, 1955
 Was naked, fletyngē in the largē see,
 And fro the navele doun al covered was
 With wawēs grene, and brighte as any glas.
 A citole in hir right hand haddē she,
 And on hir heed, ful semely for to se, 1960
 A rosē gerland, fressh and wel smellyngē,
 Above hir heed hir dowvēs flikeryngē.
 Biforn hire stood hir sonē Cupido,
 Upon his shuldrēs wyngēs hadde he two,
 And blind he was, as it is often seene; 1965
 A bowe he bar and arwēs brighte and kene.

Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
 The portreiture that was upon the wal
 Withinne the temple of myghty Mars the rede?
 Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede, 1970

1946. *kaytyf*, captive.

1949. *champartie*, partnership.

1950. *gye*, guide.

1951. *las*, snare; *H trace*.

1956. *fletyngē*, floating.

1958. *wawes*, waves.

1959. *citole*, a musical instrument with strings.

1965. *is*, E was.

Lyk to the estrès of the grisly place
 That highte the gretè temple of Mars in Trace,
 In thilké coldé, frosty regioun
 Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

- First, on the wal was peynted a forest, 1975
- In which ther dwelleth neither man nor best,
- With knotty, knarry, bareyne treès olde
 Of stubbès sharpe and hidouse to biholde,
- In which ther ran a rumbel in a swough, 1979
 As though a storm sholde bresten every bough ;
 And downward from an hille, under a bente,
- Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotente,
- Wrought al of burnéd steel, of which the entree
- Was long and streit, and gastly for to see ;
- And ther out came a rage, and such a veze 1985
- That it made all the gatés for to rese.
- The northren lyght in at the dorés shoon,—
 For wyndowe on the wal ne was ther noon
 Thurgh which men myghten any light discerne,—
- The dores were al of adamant eterne, 1990

1971. *estres*, inner parts.

1972. *gretè temple of Mars in Trace*, i.e. the temple under Mt. Hæmus, described by Statius in the seventh book of the *Thebaid*, lines 40-63. Statius here served as a model to Boccaccio.

1976. *best*, beast.

1977. *knarry*, gnarled.

1978. *stubbès*, stumps.

1979. *rumbel*, H *swymbel*, moaning (of wind).
in, E² *and*.

1979. *swough*, sougning (of wind).

1980. *bresten*, burst.

1981. *from*, H² *on*.
bente, slope.

1983. *burned*, burnished.

1985. *veze*, rush of wind. The "impetus amens" of Statius refers rather to headlong hardihood than to physical forces.

1986. *gates*, E² *gate*.
rese, shake.

1990. *dores were*, E² *dore was*.

- Y-clenchèd overthwart and endèlong
 · With iren tough, and for to make it strong,
 · Every pylér the temple to sustene
 · Was tonnè greet, of iren bright and shene.
 · Ther saugh I first the derke ymaginyng 1995
 · Of felonye, and al the compassyng ;
 · The crueel ire, reed as any gleede ;
 · The pyképurs, and eke the palé drede ;
 · The smylere, with the knyfe under the clokc ;
 The shepnè, brennyng with the blaké smoke ; 2000
 The tresoun of the mordrynge in the bedde ;
 The open werre, with woundès al bi-bledde ;
 · Contek with bloody knyf, and sharpe manace
 · Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place.
 The sleere of hym self yet saugh I ther, 2005
 His hertè blood hath bathèd al his heer ;
 The nayl y-dryven in the shode a-nyght ;
 The coldè deeth, with mouth gapyng up right.
 Amyddès of the temple sat Meschaunce,
 With discomfort and sory contenance. 2010

1991. *Y-clenched*, clamped across and lengthways.

1994. *tonne greet*, great as a tun.

1996. *al*, om. E².

1997. *reed*, H² as *reed*.
gleede, spark.

1998. *pykepurs*, the pickpursè is not mentioned in Boccaccio. Wright explains it to refer to the riflers of the dead after a battle. But in Wright's own quotation from the

Compost of Ptolomeus it is said, "Under Mars is borne *theves* and *robbers* that kepe hye wayes."

eke, om. E².

2000. *shepne*, sheep-folds.

2003. *Contek*, strife.

2004. *chirkyng*, screaming.

2007. *shode*, parting of the hair, cp. Group D, lines 765-770.

2009. *Meschaunce*, Statius "virtus tristissima."

M C 1361

Yet saugh I Woodnesse, laughynge in his rage,
 Arméd compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage,
 The careyne, in the busk, with throte y-corve,
 A thousand slayn and nat of qualm y-storve ;
 The tiraunt with the pray by force y-raft ; 2015
 | The toun destroyèd, ther was no thyng laft.

Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppestères ;
 The hunté strangled with the wildè beres ;
 The sowé frēten the child right in the cradel ;
 The cook y-scalded for al his longe ladel. 2020

Noght was forgeten by the infortune of Marte
 | The cartere over-ryden with his carte ;
 Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
 Ther were also of Martes divisoun,
 The barbour and the bocher, and the smyth 2025
 That forgeth sharpè swerdès on his styth ;

2011. *Woodnesse*, madness.2012. *Armed compleint*, Statius has "Mors armata."
out-hees, hue and cry.2013. *careyne*, corpse.*busk*, bush.*y-corve*, cut.2014. *and nat*, E and nat oon,
 a good reading if we omit *and*.*of qualm y-storve*, dead of disease.2017. *the shippes hoppesteres*,
 the dancing ships. Chaucer is translating
Teseide, vii. 37. "Vede-
 devi ancor le navi
 bellatrici," and prob-
 ably read the last word
 "ballatrici" in error.
 "Neither Boccaccio, nor

yet his prototype Statius,
 speaks of any ships as
 burnt but merely as
 trophies" (Six-text note).
 2018. *hunte*, hunter. H ends
 the line "with wilde
 bores corage" to rhyme
 with "rage" in 2011,
 omitting all between.

2019. *freten*, eat.2025. *barbour*, i.e. barber-sur-
 geon. In Wright's ex-
 tract from the *Compost*
of Ptolomeus it is said,
 "These men of Mars . . .
 wyll be gladly Smythes
 or workers of iron . . .
 good to be a barboure
 and a blode letter and
 to drawe tethe."2026. *styth*, anvil.

And al above, depeynted in a tour,
 Saugh I Conquést sittynge in greet honour
 Wíth the sharpé swerd over his heed
 Hángynge by a soutil twynés threed. 2030

Depeynted was the slaughtre of Julius,
 Of grete Nero, and of Antonius,—
 Al be that thilké tyme they were unborn,
 Yet was hir deth depeynted ther biforn
 By manasyng of Mars, right by figure, 2035
 So was it shewèd in that portreiture
 As is depeynted in the sterres above
 Who shal be slayn or ellés deed for love ;
 Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde,
 I may nat rekene hem allé though I wolde. 2040

The statue of Mars upon a carté stood,
 Arméd, and lookéd grym as he were wood,
 And over his heed ther shynen two figures
 Of sterrés that been clepéd in scriptures,
 That oon Puella, that oother Rubëus. 2045
 This god of armés was arrayéd thus :
 A wolf ther stood biforn hym at his feet
 With eyen rede, and of a man he eet.
 With soutil pencil depeynted was this storie
 In rédoutynge of Mars and of his glorie. 2050

Now to the temple of Dyane the chaste,
 As shortly as I kan, I wol me haste

2035. *manasyng*, menacing.

2037. *sterres*, E⁸ *sertres* or *certres*.

2042. *wood*, mad.

2045. *Puella*. "Signifieth Mars retrograde and Rubeus, Mars direct" (Speght).

2049. *depeynted was*, E⁸ *was depeynted*.

To tellé yow al the descripsioun.
 Depeynted been the wallés up and doun
 Of huntyng and of shamefast chastitee. 2055
 Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
 Whan that Diane agrevéd was with here,
 Was turnéd from a womman to a bere,
 And after was she maad the loodé-sterre ;
 Thus was it peynted, I kan sey yow no ferre. 2060
 Hir sone is eek a sterre as men may see.
 Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,—
 I mené nat the goddessé Diane,
 But Penneus doughter which that highté Dane.
 Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked, 2065
 For vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked ;
 I saugh how that hise houndés have hym caught
 And freeten hym, for that they knewe hym naught.
 Yet peynted was a litel forther moor
 How Atthalante hunted the wildé boor, 2070
 And Meleagre, and many another mo,
 For which Dyané wroghte hym care and wo.
 Ther saugh I many another wonder storie
 The whiche me list nat drawen to memórie.

2056. *Calistopee*, i.e. the Arcadian nymph Calisto, turned by Jove, for his own ends, into a bear, and slain by Diana through the wiles of Juno. She was then changed by Jove into Arctos the Great Bear.

2061. *eeek a sterre*, the constellation Boötes.

2062. *Dane*, i.e. Daphne. *til*, to.

2065. *Attheon*, Actæon.

2068. *freeten*, eat.

2069. *was*, om. E.

2070. *Atthalante*, Atalanta.

2072. *hym*, H *hem*.

This goddess on an hert ful hye seet, 2075
 With smalè houndès al aboute hir feet,
 And undernethe hir feet she hadde a moone,
 Wexyng it was, and sholdè wanye soone.
 In gaudè grene hir statue clothèd was,
 With bowe in honde and arwès in a cas ; 2080
 Hir eyen castè she ful lowe adoun
 Ther Pluto hath his derké regioun.

A womman travailyng was hire biforn,
 But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
 Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle 2085
 And seyde, "Helpe, for thou mayst best of alle."
 Wel koude he peynten lifly, that it wroghte ;
 With many a floryn he the hewès boghte.

Now been the lystès maad, and Thesëus,
 That at his gretè cost arrayèd thus 2090
 The templs, and the theatre every deel,
 Whan it was doon hym lyké wonder weel ;
 But stynte I wole of Thesëus a lite,
 And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approacheth of hir rêtournynge, 2095
 That everich sholde an hundred knyghtès brynge,
 The bataille to dareyne, as I yow tolde,
 And til Atthenes, hir covenantz for to holde,
 Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knyghtes
 Wel armèd for the werre at allè rightes ; 2100

2075. *ful*, E³ *ful wel*.2085. *Lucyna*, the name of Diana as helper of women in labour.2089. *the*, H⁶ *thise*.2097. *darreyne*, contest.2098. *for*, om. H.2100. *at alle rightes*, rightly in every way.

And sikerly ther trowed many a man
 That nevere sithen that the world bigan,
 As for to speke of knyghthod of hir hond,
 As fer as God hath makéd see or lond,
 Nas, of so fewe, so noble a compaignye ; 2105
 For every wight that lovède chivalrye
 And wolde, his thankès, han a passant name,
 Hath preyed that he myghte been of that game ;
 And wel was hym that ther-to chosen was ;
 For if ther fille tomorwé swich a caas, 2110
 Ye knowen wel that every lusty knyght
 That loveth paramours, and hath his myght,
 Were it in Engèlond or ellès-where,
 They wolde, hir thankès, wilnen to be there.
 To fighté for a lady,—*benedicitee* ! 2115
 It were a lusty sighté for to see.
 And right so ferden they with Palamon.
 With hym ther wenten knyghtès many on ;
 Som wol ben arméd in an haubergeoun,
 And in bristplate and in a light gypoun ; 2120
 And somme woln have a pairé platés large ;
 And somme woln have a Puce sheeld or a
 targe ;
 Somme woln ben arméd on hir leggés weel,
 And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel ;
 Ther is no newé gyse that it nas old. 2125

2101. *sikerly*, surely.2107. *his thankès*, willingly.*passant*, surpassing.2108. *preyed*, E. *preyd*.2112. *paramours*, as a lover.2120. *And in, H In a* ; Heng-
wrt⁴, *And in a*.*gypoun*, short vest.2122. *Puce*, Prussian.

Árméd were they, as I have yow told,
Everych after his opinion.

Ther maistow seen comynge with Palamon

- Lygurge hymself, the greté kyng of Trace ;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face ; 2130
The cercles of hise eyen in his heed
They glowéden bitwyxen yelow and reed,
And lik a grifphon looked he aboute,
With kempé heeris on hise browés stoute ; 2134
- Hise lymés grete, hise brawnés harde and stronge,
Hise shuldrés brode, his armés rounde and longe,
And, as the gysé was in his contree,
Ful hye upon a chaar of gold stood he
With fouré whité bolés in the trays.
- In stede of cote-armure, over his harnays 2140
• With naylés yelewe, and brighte as any gold,
• He hadde a berés skyn, colblak, for-old.
His longé heer was kembd bihynde his bak ;
As any ravenes fethere it shoon for-blak ;
A wrethe of gold, arm-greet, of hugé wighte, 2145
Upon his heed set ful of stonés brighte,
Of fyné rubyes and of dyamauntz ;
Aboute his chaar ther wenten white alauntz,
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leoun or the deer ; 2150

2129. *Lygurge*, Lycurgus. In the *Teseide* he fights on Arcite's side.
2134. *kempe*, shaggy.
2135. *brawnes*, muscles.
2138. *chaar*, car.

2139 *boles*, etc., bulls in the traces.
2142. *for-old*, very old.
2144. *for-blak*, very black.
2148. *alaunts*, boar-hounds.

And folwéd hym with mosel faste y-bounde,
 Colered of gold and tourettes fyléd rounde.
 An hundred lordés hadde he in his route,
 Arméd ful wel, with hertés stierne and stoute.

With Arcita, in stories as men fynde, 2155
 The grete Emetréus, the kyng of Inde,
 Upon a steedé bay, trappéd in steel,
 Covered in clooth of gold, dyapred weel,
 Cam ridyng lyk the god of armés, Mars.
 His cote armuré was of clooth of Tars 2160
 Couchéd with perlés, white and rounde and
 grete ;

His sadel was of brend gold, newe y-bete ;
 A mantelet up-on his shulder hangyng,
 Brat ful of rubyes rede, as fyr sparklyng ;
 His crispé heer, lyk ryngés was y-ronne, 2165
 And that was yelow, and glytered as the sonne.
 His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn ;
 Hise lippés rounde, his colour was sangwyn ;
 A fewé frakenes in his face y-spreynd,
 Bitwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd, 2170
 And as a leoun he his lookyng caste.
 Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste ;

2151. *mosel*, muzzle.

2152. *Colered*, with collars.
tourettes or *torets*, holes
 pierced in the collar to
 admit rings.

2155. *Arcita*, E³ *Arcite*.

2160. *clooth of Tars*, i.e. Tar-
 tary, Chinese stuffs which
 passed through Tartary

on their way to Europe.

2161. *Couchéd*, inlaid.

2163. *mantelet*, E³ *mantel*.

2164. *Brat ful*, or *bret ful*, lit.
 full to its brim ; cp.
 l. 687.

2169. *frakenes*, freckles.
y-spreynd, sprinkled.

2170. *y-meynd*, mingled.

His berd was wel bigonné for to sprynge ;
 His voys was as a trompé thondrynge ;
 • Upon his heed he wered, of laurer grene, 2175
 A gerland, fressh and lusty for to sene.
 Upon his hand he bar for his deduyt
 An egle tame, as any lilye whyt.
 An hundred lordés hadde he with hym there,
 Al arméd, save hir heddés, in al hir gere, 2180
 Ful richèly in allé maner thynges ;
 For trusteth wel that dukés, erlès, kynges,
 Were gadered in this noble compaignye,
 For love and for encrees of chivalrye.
 Aboute this kyng ther ran on every part 2185
 Ful many a tame leoun and leôpard.
 And in this wise these lordés, alle and some,
 Been on the Sonday to the citee come
 Abouté pryme, and in the toun alight.
 This Thesëus, this duc, this worthy knyght, 2190
 Whan he had broght hem in to his citee
 And innéd hem, everich in his degree,
 He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labóur
 To esen hem, and doon hem al honóur,
 That yet men weneth that no mannés wit 2195
 Of noon estaat ne koude amenden it.

2177. *deduyt*, delight ; H² *delite*.

2180. second *al*, om. H.

2188. *the Sonday*, i.e. the "this day fifty wykes" from the Saturday May 5th in which Palamon and

Arcite first fought (see l. 1850).

2189. *pryme*, six o'clock in the morning.

2192. *inned*, housed.

in, H² *at* ; Pet. *after*.

2195. *manner*, E *maner*.

The mynstralcy, the service at the feeste,
 The greté giftes to the meeste and leeste,
 The riche array of Thesëus paleys,
 Ne who sat first, ne last upon the deys, 2200
 What ladyes fairest been, or best daunsynge,
 Or which of hem kan dauncen best and synge,
 Ne who moost felyngly speketh of love,
 What haukés sitten on the perche above,
 What houndés liggen in the floor adoun,— 2205
 Of al this make I now no menciouun,
 But al theffect, that thynketh me the beste ;
 Now cometh the point, and herkneth if yow leste.

The Sonday nyght, er day bigan to sprynge,
 Whan Palamon the larké herdé synge, 2210
 Al though it nere nat day by hourés two,
 Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
 With hooly herte and with an heigh corage,
 He roos to wenden on his pilgrymage
 Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,— 2215
 I mené Venus, honorable and digne,—
 And in hir houre he walketh forth a paas
 Unto the lystés, ther hire temple was,

2198. *meeste*, most, *i.e.* most important.

2200. *deys*, dais.

2205. *liggen*, lie.

2207. *al*, *H of*, perhaps rightly.

2211. *nere*, ne were.

2217. *in hir houre*: the first hour of each day belonged to that one of the seven deities, Saturn,

Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna, to whom the day was dedicated ; the second to the next on the list, the third to the next, and so on. Sunday being dedicated to Sol, Venus would preside over the second, ninth, sixteenth and twenty-third hours, the last of which would begin two hours before day-break on Monday.

And doun he kneleth with ful humble cheer
And herté soor, and seyde in this manere :— 2220

“Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,

• Doughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
• Thow gladere of the mount of Citheron,
• For thilké love thow haddest to Adoon,
• Have pitee of my bittre teeris smerte, 2225

And taak myn humble preyere at thyn herte.

• Allas ! I ne havé no langage to telle
• Theffectés ne the tormentz of myn helle ;
• Myn herté may myne harmés nat biwreie ;
• I am so cónfus that I kan noght seye. 2230

• But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weele
• My thought, and seest what harmés that I feele,
• Considere al this and rewe upon my soore
• As wisly as I shal for everemoore,
• Emforth my myght, thy trewé servant be, 2235

And holden werre alwey with chastitee,
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe,

• I kepé noght of armés for to yelpe.
• Ne I ne axe nat tomorwe to have victórie,
• Ne rênoun in this cas, ne veyné glorie 2240
• Of pris of armés, blowen up and doun,
• But I wolde have fully possessioun

2219. *with ful*, H⁶ *and with*.

2220. *and seyde in this manere*,
H⁶ *he seide as ye shal*
here.

2222. *to*, H² *of*.
of, H⁵ *to*.

2224. *Adoon*, Adonis.

2226. *at*, H *to*.

2234. *wisly*, surely.

2235. *Emforth*, according to.

2238. *kepe*, care.
yelpe, boast.

- . Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse.
 . Fynd thow the manere, hou and in what wyse,
 . I recché nat, but it may bettre be, 2245
 . To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
 . So that I have my lady in myne armes,
 For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
 Youre vertu is so greet in hevne above
 That if yow list I shal wel have my love. 2250
 . "Thy temple wol I worshipe everemo,
 . And on thyn auter, where I ride or go,
 . I wol doon sacrifice and firès beete ;
 . And if ye wol nat so, my lady sweete,
 . Thanne preye I thee, tomorwe with a spere 2255
 . That Arcita me thurgh the herté bere ;
 . Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
 . Though that Arcita wyne hire to his wyf :
 This is theeffect and ende of my preyère,—
 Gif me my love, thow blisful lady deere." 2260
 Whan the orison was doon of Palamon,
 His sacrifice he dide, and that anon,
 Ful pitously with allé circumstaunces,
 Al telle I noght as now his observaunces ;
 But atté laste the statue of Venus shook 2265
 And made a signé wher-by that he took
 That his preyère accepted was that day ;
 For thogh the signé shewed a delay,

2252. *where I ride or go,*

whether I ride or walk.

2253. *beete*, kindle.

2258. *Arcita wyne*, H *Arcite*

have.

2263, 64. E³ *circumstaunce*, ob-
servaunce.

2264. *Al*, although.

Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his boone,
And with glad herte he wente hym hoom ful soone.

The thridde houre in-equal that Palamon 2271
Bigan to Venus temple for to gon,
Up roos the sonne and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Dyane gan she hye.

Hir maydens that she thider with hire ladde 2275
Ful redily with hem the fyr they ladde,
Thencens, the clothés, and the remenant al
That to the sacrificé longen shal,

The hornés fulle of meeth, as was the gyse,—
Ther lakkéd noght to doon hir sacrificise. 2280

Smokynge the temple, ful of clothés faire,
This Emelye, with herté debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle ;
But hou she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general, 2285

And yet it were a game to heeren al ;
To hym that meneth wel it were no charge,
But it is good a man been at his large.

Hir brighté heer was kempd, untresséd al,
· A coroune of a grene ook cerial 2290
· Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete ;

2271. *The thridde houre in-equal*, three hours after "two hours before sunrise," i.e. the first hour on Monday, that dedicated to Luna or Diana: *in-equal* shows that the reckoning is by planetary hours, which vary with the length of the day.

2274. *she*, om. E⁵.

2279. *meeth*, mead.

2281. *Smokynge*, i.e. with incense.

2287. *no charge*, no harm.

2290. *grene ook cerial*, Boccaccio's "quercia ceriale," the holm oak.

- Two fyrés on the auter gan she beete,
And dide hir thyngés as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebés, and thise bookés olde.
- Whan kyndled was the fyr, with pitous cheere, 2295
- Unto Dyane she spak as ye may heere :—
- “O chasté goddesse of the wodés grene,
- To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,
- Queene of the regne of Pluto, derk and lowe,
- Goddess of maydens that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire, 2301
- As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire
- That Attheon aboughté cruelly ;
Chasté goddessé, wel wostow that I
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf, 2305
Ne nevere wol I be no love, ne wyf.
- I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye
- A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,
- And for to walken in the wodés wilde,
And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe ; 2310
- | Noght wol I knowe the compaignye of man.
Now helpe me, lady, sith ye may and kan,
For tho thre formés that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite that loveth me so soore, 2315

2294. *In Stace of Thebes, i.e.*
the *Thebais* of Statius,
where, however, no de-
scription of these obser-
vances occur.

2303. *Attheon*, Actæon.
aboughté, atoned for.
cruelly, *H trewely*.

2308. *venerye*, the chase.

2313. *tho thre formes*, Diana,
a “*diva triformis*,” was
known as Luna in
heaven, Diana or Lu-
cina on earth, and Pro-
serpina in hell.

- This grace I preyè thee withoutè moore ;
 · As sendè love and pees bitwixe hem two,
 · And fro me turne away hir hertès so
 · That al hire hootè love and hir desir,
 · And al hir bisy torment and hir fir, 2320
 · Be queynt or turnèd in another place.
 And if so be thou wolt do me no grace,
 · Or if my destynnee be shapen so
 · That I shal nedès have oon of hem two,
 · As sende me hym that moost desireth me. 2325
 Bihoold, goddesse of clenè chastitee,
 | The bittre teeres that on my chekès falle.
 Syn thou art mayde, and kepere of us alle,
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve
 And whil I lyve a mayde I wol thee serve." 2330
 · The firès brenne upon the auter cleere
 · Whil Emelye was thus in hir preyère,
 But sodeynly she saugh a sightè queynte,
 · For right anon oon of the fyrès queynte
 · And quyked agayn, and after that, anon 2335
 · That oother fyr was queynt and al agon,
 · And as it queynte it made a whistélynge,
 · As doon thise wetè brondes in hir brennynge ;
 · And at the brondès ende out ran anon
 · As it were blody dropès many oon ; 2340
 For which so soore agast was Emelye

2317. *As, E⁵ And.*2323. *Or, E And.*2333, 34. *queynte . . . queynte,*
*quaint . . . quenched.*2337. *whistelynge, E whistlynge.*2338. *brondes, brands ; H as*
doth a wete brond in his
brennyng.

- That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
 | For she ne wistè what it signyfièd,
 But oonly for the feere thus hath she cried,
 And weepe that it was pitee for to heere ; 2345
 • And ther-with-al Dyanè gan appeere,
 • With bowe in honde right as an hunteresse,
 And seyde, “ Doghter, stynt thyn hevynesse.
 • Among the goddès hye it is affermed,
 And by eternè word writen and confermed, 2350
 • Thou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho
 That han for thee so muchel care and wo,
 But unto which of hem I may nat telle.
 Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
 | The firès whiche that on myn auter brenne 2355
 | Shulle thee declaren, er that thou go henne,
 | Thyn áventure of love, as in this cas.”
 • And with that word the arwès in the caas
 • Of the goddessè clateren faste and rynges,
 • And forth she wente and made a vanysshynge,
 For which this Emelye astonéd was, 2361
 And seyde, “ What amounteth this, allas !
 I puttè me in thy proteccioun,
 Dyane, and in thy disposicioun.”
 • And hoom she goth anon the nextè weye. 2365
 This is theeffect, ther is namoore to seye.
 The nextè houre of Mars folwyng this,
 Arcite unto the temple walkéd is

2344. *hath*, om. H².2356. *declaren*, EH³ *declare*.2358. *caas*, case, quiver.2367. *The nexte houre of Mars*,
the fourth hour of the
day.

- Of fiersé Mars, to doon his sacrificise
 With alle the rytès of his payen wyse. 2370
 With pitous herte and heigh devocioun
 Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun : —
 “O strongé god, that in the regnès colde
 Of Trace honóured art and lord y-holde,
 And hast in every regne and every lond 2375
 Of armés al the brydel in thyn hond,
 And hem fortúnest as thee lyst devyse,
 Accepte of me my pitous sacrificise.
 If so be that my youthé may deserve,
 And that my myght be worthy for to serve 2380
 Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,
 Thanne preye I thee to rewe upon my pyne.
 For thilké peyne, and thilké hooté fir,
 In which thou whilom brendest for desir,
 Whan that thou usedeste the béautee 2385
 Of fairé, yongé, fresshé Venus free,
 And haddest hire in armés at thy wille,
 Al-though thee onés on a tyme mysfille,
 Whan Vulcanus hadde caught thee in his las,
 And foond thee liggyng by his wyf, alas ! 2390
 For thilké sorwé that was in thyn herte,
 Have routhe as wel upon my peynés smerte.
 I am yong and unkonnyng, as thow woost,
 And, as I trowe, with love offended moost
 That evere was any lyvès creature ; 2395

2369. *Of fierse Mars*, H To
fyrr Mars.

2370. *payen wyse*, pagan fashion.

2373. *regnes*, regions.

2389. *las*, net.

2395. *lyves*, living.

- For she that dooth me al this wo endure
 Nè reccheth nevere wher I synke or fleete.
 And wel I woot er she me mercy heete
 I moot with strengthé wyne hire in the place,
 . And wel I woot withouten helpe or grace 2400
 . Of thee, ne may my strengthé noght availle.
 . Thanne helpe me, lord, tomorwe in my bataille,
 . For thilké fyr that whilom brenté thee,
 . As wel as thilké fyr now brenneth me,
 And do that I tomorwe have victorie. 2405
 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie.
 Thy sovereyn temple wol I moost honouren
 Of any place, and alwey moost labouren
 In thy plesaunce, and in thy craftés stronge ;
 . And in thy temple I wol my baner honge, 2410
 . And alle the armés of my compaignye,
 And evere mo, un-to that day I dye,
 . Eterné fir I wol biforn thee fynde :
 And eek to this avow I wol me bynde.
 . My beerd, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,
 . That nevere yet ne felte offensioun 2416
 . Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee geve,
 And ben thy trewé servant whil I lyve.
 Now, lord, have routhe upon my sorwés soore,
 Gif me the victorie, I aske thee namoore !” 2420
 The preyère stynt of Arcita the stronge,
 The ryngés on the temple dore that honge,
 . And eek the dorés, clatereden ful faste,

2397. *wher*, whether.
fleete, float.

2398. *heete*, promise.
 2421. *stynt*, ended.

- Of which Arcita som-what hym agaste.
 · The fyrés brenden upon the auter brighte, 2425
 · That it gan al the temple for to lighte ;
 · And sweeté smel the ground anon up gaf,
 | And Arcita anon his hand up haf
 | And moore encens into the fyr he caste,
 With othere rytés mo, and atté last 2430
 · The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk rynge ;
 · And with that soun he herde a murmurynge
 | Ful lowe and dym, and seyde thus : "Victorie !"
 For which he gaf to Mars honour and glorie.
 · And thus with joye and hopé wel to fare, 2435
 Arcite anon unto his in is fare,
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighté sonne.
 · And right anon swich strif ther is bigonne
 · For thilké grauntyng in the hevene above,
 · Bitwixé Venus, the goddessse of love, 2440
 · And Mars, the stierné god armypotente,
 That Juppiter was bisy it to stente ;
 Til that the palé Saturnus the colde,
 That knew so manye of adventures olde,
 Foond in his olde experience an art 2445
 That he ful soone hath pleséd every part.
 As sooth is seyde, elde hath greet ávantáge ;
 In elde is bothé wysdom and uságe ;
 Men may the olde at-renne and noght at-rede.
 Saturne anon, to stynten strif and drede, 2450

2428. *haf*, heaved.2445. *an*, *E*² *and*.2449. *at-renne*, outrun.2449. *and*, *H*² *but*.*at-rede*, outwit. The line
is a proverb.

Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this strif he gan remédie fynde.

"My deerè doghter Venus," quod Saturne,
"My cours, that hath so wydè for to turne,
Hath moorè power than woot any man ; 2455
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan,
Myn is the prison in the derké cote,
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte,
The murmure and the cherlès rébellyng,
The groynynge and the pryvee empoysonyng ;
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun 2461
Whfl I dwelle in signe of the leoun ;
Myn is the ruyne of the hyé halles,
The fallynge of the toures and of the walles,
Upon the mynour or the carpenter,— 2465
I slow Sampson, in shakynge the piler,—
And myné be the maladyés colde,
The derké tresons and the castès olde ;
My lookyng is the fader of pestilence ;
Now weepe namoore, I shal doon diligence 2470

2451. *kynde*, nature.

2454. *My cours*, the reference is to the supposed malign influence of the planet Saturn: for its "width" Wright quotes the *Compost of Ptolemy*, which gives Saturn an orbit of more than thirty years.

2456. *drenchyng*, drowning.

2459. *cherlesrebellyng*, possibly Chaucer had in his mind "he Jacke Strawe and

his meynee"; cp. Group B, l. 4584.

2462. *in signe of the leoun*, Prof. Skeat, who has done so much to elucidate Chaucer's astronomy, notes that the first ten degrees of the sign *Leo* are called the "face of Saturn." *signe*, H⁶ the *signe*.

2466. *in*, E⁶ om.

2468. *castes*, plots.

That Palamon, that is thyn owene knyght,
 Shal have his lady as thou hast him hight.
 Though Mars shal helpe his knyght, yet nathêlees,
 Bitwixé yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
 Al be ye noght of o compleccioun, 2475
 That causeth al day swich divisioun.
 I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille ;
 Weepe now namoore, I wol thy lust fulfille."
 Now wol I stynten of the goddes above,
 Of Mars, and of Venús, goddesse of love, 2480
 And tellé yow, as pleynty as I kan,
 The grete effect for which that I bygan.

PART IV

Greet was the feeste in Atthenès that day,
 And eek the lusty seson of that May
 Made every wight to been in such plesaunce, 2485
 That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
 And spenten it in Venus heigh servyse ;
 But, by the causé that they sholdé ryse
 Éerly, for to seen the greté fight,
 Unto hir resté wenten they at nyght. 2490
 And on the morwé, whan that day gan sprynge,
 Of hors and harneys noyse and claterynge
 Ther was in hostelryës al aboute,
 And to the paleys rood ther many a route

2472. *hight*, promised.2477. *aiel*, grandfather.2493. *in*, E *in the*.

Of lordés, upon steedés and palfreys. 2495
 Ther maystow seen divisynge of harneys
 So unkouth and so riche, and wroght so weel
 Of goldsmythrye, of browdyng, and of steel,
 The sheeldés brighte, testerés, and trappúres ;
 Gold-hewen helmés, hauberkes, cote armúres ; 2500
 Lordés in paramentz on hir courseres ;
 Knyghtés of retenue, and eek squieres,
 Nailynge the speres, and helmés bokélyng,
 Giggynge of sheeldés with layneres lacynge ;
 There, as nede is, they weren no thyng ydel. 2505
 · The fomy steedés on the golden brydel
 · Gnawynge, and faste the armurers also,
 With fyle and hamer, prikyng to and fro ;
 Yemen on foote, and communes many oon
 With shorté stavés, thikke as they may goon ; 2510
 Pýpés, trompés, nakers, clariounes,
 That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes ;
 | The paleys ful of peplés up and down,—
 · Heere thre, ther ten, holdynge hir questioun,
 · Dyvynynge of thise Thebane knyghtés two. 2515
 | Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so,
 Somme helden with hym with the blaké berd,
 Somme with the balled, somme with the thikké herd,

2497. *unkouth*, rare.2498. *browdyng*, embroidery.2499. *testerés*, head - pieces,
helmets.*trappures*, trappings.2500. *Gold - hewen*, H *Gold-*
beten.2501. *paraments*, rich clothes.2504. *Giggynge*, strapping, or,
according to others,
clattering ; H *girdyng*.
layneres, straps.2508. *prikyng*, riding.2509. *foote*, E *foyle*.2511. *nakers*, drums ; E *nakeres*.2518. *herd*, haired.

Some seyde he lookéd grymme and he wolde fighte,
 He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte,—
 Thus was the hallé ful of divynynges 2521
 Longe after that the sonnè gan to sprynge.

• The grete Theseus, that of his sleepe awaked
 With mynstralcie and noysé that was maked,
 • Heeld yet the chambre of his paleys riche, 2525
 Til that the Thebane knyghtès, bothe y-liche
 Honured, were into the paleys fet.
 Duc Thesëus was at a wyndow set,
 Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
 The peple preesseth thiderward ful soone 2530
 Hym for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
 And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an "Oo!"
 Til al the noyse of peple was y-do ;
 And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille
 Tho shewéd he the myghty dukès wille. 2536

• "The lord hath of his heih discrecioun
 Considered that it were destruccioun
 To gentil blood to fighten in the gyse
 • Of mortal bataille now in this emprise, 2540
 Wherefore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,
 He wolde his firste purpos modifye.

• "No man ther-fore, up peyne of los of lyf,
 No maner shot, ne polax, ne shorte knyf,
 Into the lystès sende, ne thider brynge ; 2545

2520. *sparth*, halberd.

2527. *fet*, fetched.

2534. *peple*, H⁸ *the peple*.

2535. *the peple of noyse*, E² *the noyse of peple*.

2543. *up*, upon.

2544. *ne polax*, E² om. *ne*.

Ne short swerd, for to stoke with poynt bitýnge,
 No man ne drawe ne beré by his syde.
 Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde
 But o cours with a sharpe y-groundé spere ;
 Foyne, if hym list, on foote, hym self to were. 2550
 And he that is at meschief shal be take,
 And noght slayn, but be broght unto the stake
 Thát shal ben ordeyned on either syde ;
 But thider he shal by force, and there abyde.

“ And if so be the chiëftayn be take 2555
 On outhér syde, or ellés sleen his make,
 No lenger shal the turneiynge laste.
 God spedé you ! gooth forth, and ley on faste !
 With long swerd and with maces fighteth youre fille.
 Gooth now youre wey, this is the lordés will.” 2560
 The voys of peple touchédé the hevene,
 So loudé cridé they, with murie stevene,
 “ God savé swich a lord, that is so good,
 He wilneth no destruccion of blood ! ”

Up goon the trompés and the melodye 2565
 And to the lystës rit the compaignye
 By ordinance, thurgh out the citee large,
 Hangéd with clooth of gold, and nat with sarge.

Ful lik a lord this noble duc gan ryde,

2546. *stoke*, stick, stab.

2549. *o*, one.

2550. *Foyne*, thrust
were, guard.

2551. *at meschief*, in danger.

2555. *be*, H⁶ *falle*.
chiëftayn, *cheventein* H³.

2556. *make*, match.

2559. *fighteth*, H *fight*.

2561. *touchede*, E⁴ *touched* ;
 H reads, “ The voice
 of the poepul touchith
 heven.”

2562. *stevene*, voice.

2566. *rit*, rides.

Thisse two Thebans upon either side ; 2570
 And after rood the queene and Emelye,
 And after that another compaignye
 Of oon and oother after hir degre ;
 And thus they passen thurgh out the citee,
 And to the lystes comê they by tyme. 2575
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryme
 Whan set was Thesëus ful riche and hye,
 Ypolita the queene and Emelye,
 And othere ladys in degrees aboute.
 Unto the seettës preesseth al the route, 2580
 And westward, thurgh the gatës under Marte,
 Arcite, and eek the hondred of his parte,
 With baner reed is entred right anon.
 And in that selvè moment Palamon
 Is under Venus, estward in the place, 2585
 With baner whyt, and hardy chiere and face.
 In al the world to seken up and doun
 So evene, withouten variacioun,
 Ther nerè swiché compaignyës tweye ;
 For ther was noon so wys that koudè seye 2590
 That any hadde of oother avauntage
 Of worthynesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
 So evene were they chosen, for to gesse ;
 And in two rengës fairè they hem dresse.
 Whan that hir namès rad were everichon, 2595
 That in hir nombré gylé were ther noon,

2576. *pryme*, 6 A. M.2579. *in degrees*, on steps or
rising seats.2593. *they*, om. E.2594. *renges*, ranks.2595. *rad*, read.

Tho were the gatés shet and cried was loude,
 "Do now youre *devoir*, yongé knyghtés proude!"

The heraudes lefte hir prikyng up and doun ;
 | Now ryngen trompés loude and clarioun ; 2600

Ther is namoore to seyn, but west and est
 In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest ;

| In gooth the sharpé spore into the syde.
 Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde ;
 Ther shyveren shaftés upon sheeldés thikke ; 2605
 He feeleth thurgh the herté-spoon the prikke.

Up spryngen sperés twenty foot on highte ;
 Out gooth the swerdés as the silver brighte ;
 The helmés they to-hewen and to-shrede,
 Out brest the blood with stierné stremés rede ;

| With myghty maces the bonés they to-breste. 2611
 He, thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste,
 Ther, stomblen steedés stronge, and doun gooth al ;
 He, rolleth under foot as dooth a bal ;

He, foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun, 2615
 And he hym hurtleth with his hors adoun ;
 He, thurgh the body is hurt and sithen y-take,
 Maugree his heed, and broght unto the stake,
 As forward was, right ther he moste abyde.

| Another lad is on that oother syde. 2620

And som tyme dooth hem Thesëus to reste,
 Hem to refresshe and drynken, if hem leste.

2598. *Do*, H *Dooth*.

2602. *sadly*, firmly.

arrest, the socket of the
 spear.

2606. *herte-spoon*, ?breast-bone.

2611. *to-breste*, break in pieces.

2612. *threste*, press.

2613. *stomblen*, E² *semblen*.

2619. *forward*, agreement.

2620. *lad*, led.

2621. *dooth*, causes.

2622. *refresshe*, E *fresshen*.

Ful ofte a-day han thisé Thebanes two,
 Togydre y-met and wroght his felawe wo ;
 Unhorséd hath ech oother of hem tweye. 2625
 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
 Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is lite,
 So crueel on the hunte, as is Arcite
 For jelous herte upon this Palamoun ;
 Ne in Belmarye ther nys so fel leoun 2630
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
 As Palamoun, to sleen his foo Arcite.
 The jelous strokés on hir helmes byte ;
 Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydés rede. 2635
 Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede,
 For, er the sonne unto the resté wente,
 The strongé kyng Emetrëus gan hente
 This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
 And made his swerd depe in his flessch to byte, 2640
 And by the force of twenty is he take
 Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.
 And in the rescus of this Palamoun
 The strongé kyng Lygurge is born adoun,
 And kyng Emetrëus, for al his strengthe, 2645
 Is born out of his sadel a swerdés lengthe ;
 So hitte him Palamoun, er he were take ;
 But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.

2626. *Galgopheye*, Prof. Skeat
 identifies this with the
 valley of Gargaphie (in
 Bœotia), where Actæon
 was torn in pieces.
 Tyrwhitt suggests a town

called Galapha in Mauri-
 tania Tingitana.

2628. *hunte*, hunter.

2630. *Belmarye*, perhaps Pal-
 myra.

2638. *hente*, seize.

His hardy herté myghte hym helpé naught,
He moste abydé, whan that he was caught, 2650
By force, and eek by composicioun.

Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namooré goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus haddé seyn this sighte
Unto the folk that foghten thus echon 2655
He crydé, "Hoo! namoore, for it is doon!
I wol be trewé juge, and no partie;
Arcite of Thebés shall have Emelie
That by his fortune hath hire faire y-wonne."

Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne, 2660
For joye of this, so loude and heighe with-alle,
It seméd that the lystés sholde falle.

What kan now fairé Venus doon above?
What seith she now, what dooth this queene of
love,

But wepeth so, for wantynge of hir wille, 2665
Til that hir teerés in the lystés fille?
She seyde, "I am ashaméd doutélees."
Saturnus seyde, "Doghter, hoold thy pees,
Mars hath his wille, his knyght hath all his boone,
And, by myn heed, thow shalt been eséd soone."

The trompés, with the loudé mynstralcie, 2671
The heraudes, that ful loudé yolle and crie,
Been in hire wele, for jöye of daun Arcite.
But herkneth me, and stynteth now a lite,
Which a myracle ther bifel anon. 2675

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,

2657. *partie*, partisan.

And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
 He priketh endeloug the largé place,
 Lokynge upward up-on this Emelye,
 And she agayn hym caste a freendlich eye 2680
 (For wommen, as to speken in comune,
 Thei folwen all the favour of Fortune),
 And was al his, in chiere, as in his herte.
 Out of the ground a fyr infernal sterte,
 From Pluto sent, at réqueste of Saturne, 2685
 For which his hors for ferè gan to turne,
 And leepe aside, and foundred as he leepe,
 And er that Arcité may taken keepe,
 He pighte hym on the pomel of his heed,
 That in the place he lay as he were deed, 2690
 His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
 As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
 So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
 Anon he was y-born out of the place,
 With herté soor, to Thesëus paleys. 2695
 Tho was he korven out of his harneys,
 And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,

2678. *endeloug*, from end to end.

2679. *this*, om. E².

2681, 82. omitted in E².

2683. *And was al his, in chiere, as in his herte*: this is Dr. Furnivall's emendation, no MS. containing the first *in*—"she was all his in her looks, as the queen of his heart"; H reads *and* for *as*; Hengwrt, *And she was al his cheere*, etc. i.e. "all his delight, as regarded

his heart," but this is not the use of *cheere* here wanted.

2684. *fyr*, E² *furie*. In Boccaccio (*Tes.* ix. 4) it is a fury raised by Venus.

2689. *pighte*, pitched.

pomel, crown.

2691. *sadel-bowe*, the "bow" was a curved piece of wood fixed before and behind the saddle to hold the rider in his seat.

2697. *blyve*, quickly.

For he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alwey crynge after Emelye.

Duc Thesëus with al his compaignye 2700
Is comen hoom to Atthenes his citee
With allé blisse and greet solempnitee ;
Al be it that this áventure was falle
He noldé noght disconforten hem alle,—
Men seyden eek that Arcite shal nat dye, 2705
He shal been heeléd of his maladye.

And of another thyng they weren as fayn,
That of hem allé was ther noon y-slayn ;
Al were they soore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirléd his brest boon. 2710
To othere woundes and to broken armes
Somme hadden salvés and somme hadden charmes,
Fermaciës of herbés, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir lymés have.
For which this noble duc, as he wel kan, 2715
Conforteth and honóureth every man,
And madé revel al the longé nyght
Unto the straungé lordés as was right ;
Ne ther was holden no disconfitynge
But as a justés, or a tourneiynge ; 2720
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For fallyng nys nat but an áventure,
Ne to be lad by force unto the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtés take,

2710. *That . . . his, whose.*
thirled, pierced.

2713. *Fermacies, pharmacies,*
medicines.
save, sage.

Ó persone allone, withouten mo, 2725
 And haryed forth by armé, foot and too,
 And eke his steedé dryven forth with staves,
 With footmen, bothé yemen and eek knaves,—
 It nas aretted hym no vileynye ;
 Ther may no man clepen it cowardye. 2730

For which anon duc Thesëus leet crye,
 To stynten allé rancour and envye,
 The gree as wel of o syde as of oother,
 And eyther syde ylik as ootheres brother ;
 And gaf hem giftés after hir degree, 2735
 And fully heeld a feesté dayés three,
 And convoyéd the kyngés worthily
 Out of his toun, a journee largely,
 And hoom wente every man the righté way ;
 Ther was namoore, but “Fare wel !” “Have good
 day !” 2740

Of this bataille I wol namoore endite,
 But speke of Palamoun and of Arcyte.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the soore
 Encreesseseth at his herté moore and moore.
 The clothered blood, for any lechecraft, 2745
 Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,
 That neither veyné-blood ne ventusynge,
 Ne drynke of herbés may ben his helpynge ;
 The vertu expulsif, or animal,

2725. *O*, one.

2729. *aretted*, accounted.

2730. *Ther may*, etc. : *H Ne*
no maner man held it
no cowardye.

2733. *gree*, pre-eminence.

2745. *clothered*, clotted.

2746. *bouk*, body.

2747. *ventusynge*, cupping.

Fro thilké vertu clepéd natural, 2750

Ne may the venym voyden ne expelle.

The pipés of his longés gonne to swelle,

And every lacerte in his brest adoun

Is shent with venym and corrupcioun.

Hym gayneth neither, for to gete his lif, 2755

Vomyt upward, ne dounward laxatif;

Al is to-brosten thilké regioun;

Nature hath now no dominacioun;

And certainly, ther Nature wol nat wirche,

Farewel phisik, go ber the man to chirche. 2760

This al and som, that Arcita moot dye,

For which he sendeth after Emelye,

And Palamon, that was his cosyn deere.

Thanne seyde he thus as ye shal after heere :

“ Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte 2765

Declare o point of alle my sorwés smerte

To yow, my lady, that I lovè moost,

But I biquethe the servyce of my goost

To yow aboven every creäture,

Syn that my lyf ne may no lenger dure. 2770

Allas the wo ! alas, the peynés stronge,

That I for yow have suffred, and so longe !

Allas, the deeth ! alas, myn Emelye !

Allas, departynge of our compaignye !

Allas, myn hertés queene ! alas, my wyf ! 2775

Myn hertés lady, endere of my lyf !

2753. *lacerte*, muscle.

2754. *shent*, confounded.

2761. *This al and som*, this is

the whole story.

2770. *ne*, supplied by Tyrwhitt ;

EH⁷ om.

What is this world? what asketh men to have?
 Now with his love, now in his coldé grave
 Allone, withouten any compaignye.

Farewel, my sweté foo, myn Emelye! 2780

| And softé taak me in youre armés tweye
 For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.

| "I have heer with my cosyn Palamon

| Had strif and rancour many a day agon

| For love of yow, and for my jalousye, 2785

| And Juppiter so wys my soulé gye

| To speken of a servaunt proprely,

| With allé circumstances trewely,—

| That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knyghthede,

| Wysdom, humblesse, estaat and heigh kynrede, 2790

| Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,—

| So Juppiter have of my soulé part

| As in this world right now ne knowe I non

| So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,

| That serveth yow and wol doon al his lyf. 2795

| And if that evere ye shul ben a wyf,

| Forget nat Palamon, the gentil man,"—

| And with that word his spechè faille gan,

• For from his feet up to his brest was come

• The coold of deeth, that hadde hym overcome; 2800

• And yet moore-over, for in his armés two,

• The vital strengthe is lost and al ago.

2786. *so wys my soule gye*, so
 surely guide my soul.

2787. *servaunt*, lover.

2789. *and*, om. E⁴.

2799. *For*, E and.
feet, EH³ *herte*; Petworth
for from his fete unto the
herte.

2801. *for*, om. H.

· Oonly the intellect, withouten moore
 · That dwelléd in his herté syk and soore,
 · Gan faillen when the herté felté deeth, 2805
 · Duskéd hise eyen two and failléd breeth.
 · But on his lady yet caste he his eye ;
 · His lasté word was, " Mercy, Emelye ! "

| His spirit chaungéd hous, and wenté ther,
 | As I cam nevere, I kan nat tellen wher. 2810
 | Therfore I stynte, I nam no divinistre ;
 Of soulés fynde I nat in this registre,
 Ne me ne list thilke opinions to telle,
 Of hem though that they writen wher they dwelle.
 Arcite is coold, ther Mars his soulé gye ; 2815
 Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.

| Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
 And Thesëus his suster took anon
 Swownynge, and baar hire fro the corps away.
 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day 2820
 To tellen how she weepe, bothe eve and morwe ?
 For in swich cas wommen can have swiche sorwe
 Whan that hir housbonds ben from hem ago
 That for the mooré part they sorwen so,
 Or ellis fallen in swich maladye 2825
 That, at the lasté, certainly they dye.

| Infinite been the sorwés and the teeres
 | Of oldé folk, and folk of tendré yeeres,
 | In all the toun for deeth of this Theban ;

2822. *can*, om. E⁶.

2823. *housbonds ben*, E *husbond*
is.

2826. *at the laste*, I am afraid
there is mischief in these
three words.

2828. *and folk*, E *and eek*.

- | For hym ther wepeth bothé child and man ; 2830
 · So greet a wepyng was ther noon certayn
 · Whan Ector was y-brought al fressh yslayn
 To Troye. Allas ! the pitee that was ther,
 Cracchyng of chekés, rentyng eek of heer. 2834
 “Why woldestow be deed ?” thise wommen crye,
 “And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye.”
 · No man ne myghté gladen Theseus,
 Savynge his oldé fader Egeus,
 · That knew this worldés transmutacioun,
 · As he hadde seyn it chaungen, up and down, 2840
 · Joye after wo and wo after gladnesse,
 · And shewed hem ensamples and liknesse.
 · “Right as ther dyed nevere man,” quod he,
 · “That he ne lyvede in erthe in som degree,
 · Right so ther lyvede never man,” he seyde, 2845
 · “In all this world, that som tym he ne deyde ;
 This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
 And we been pilgrymes passynge to and fro ;
 Deeth is an ende of every worldly soore ;”
 And over al this yet seyde he muchel moore 2850
 To this effect, ful wisely to enhorté
 The peple that they sholde hem reconforte.
 · Duc Thesëus, with all his bisy cure,
 · Cast busily wher that the sepulture
 · Of goode Arcite may best y-makéd be, 2855
 · And eek moost honorable in his degree ;

2834. *Cracchyng*, scratching.2840. *chaungen*, from Hengwrt;H *torne* ; E^a om.2849. *worldly*, E *worldes*.2854. *busily*, E^a *now*.

- And at the laste he took conclusioun
 That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
 Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
 That in that selvè grové, swoote and grene, 2860
 · Ther as he hadde hise amoureuse desires,
 · His compleynte, and for love hise hooté fires,
 · He woldé make a fyr in which the office
 · Fúnéral he myghte al accomplice ;
 And leet comande anon to hakke and hewe 2865
 The okés olde, and leye hem on a rewe,
 In colpons, wel arrayéd for to brenne.
 · Hise officers with swifté feet they renne,
 · And ryden anon at his comandément.
 · And after this Theséus hath y-sent 2870
 · After a beere, and it al over spradde
 · With clooth of gold, the richeste that he hadde ;
 · And of the same suyte he clad Arcite.
 Upon his hondés hadde he glovés white,
 · Eek on his heed a coroune of laurer grene, 2875
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
 He leyde hym, bare the visage, on the beere.
 Ther-with he weepe that pitee was to heere ;
 · And, for the peple sholdé seen hym alle,
 · Whan it was day he broghte hym to the halle, 2880
 · That roreth of the cryng and the soun.
 · Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
 · With flotery berd and ruggy asshy heeres,

2867. *colpons*, pieces.2870. *Theseus hath*, it would
improve the line to read
hath Theseus.2883. *flotery*, floating, dis-
hevelled.
ruggy, uncombed ; E
rugged.

- In clothés blake, y-droppéd al with teeres ;
 And passyng othere of wepyng, Emelye, 2885
 The rewefulleste of al the compaignye.
- In as muche as the servyce sholdé be
 The mooré noble and riche in his degree,
 Duc Thesëus leet forth thre steedés brynge,
 That trappéd were in steele al gliterynge 2890
 And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
 Upon thise steedes that weren grete and white,
 Ther sitten folk, of whiche oon baar his sheeld,
 Another his spere up in his hondés heeld,
 The thriddé baar with hym his bowe Turkeys 2895
 (Of brend gold was the caas, and eek the harneys) ;
 And riden forth a paas with sorweful cheere,
 Toward the grove, as ye shul after heere.
- The nobleste of the Grekés that ther were
- Upon hir shuldrés caryeden the beere, 2900
 With slaké paas, and eyen rede and wete,
 Thurgh-out the citee by the maister strete,
 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
 Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.
- Upon the right hond wente olde Egëus, 2905
- And on that oother syde duc Thesëus,
- With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn
- Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn :

2892. *that weren*, om. E⁶.2894. *up in*, so H ; E *in* ; rest
upon.2895. *his bowe Turkeys*, cp.
Rom. of the Rose 923,
"Turke bowes troo."2897. *a paas*, slowly.2901. *slake*, E⁴ *slak*.2904. *al*, om. E⁶.*y-wrye*, covered.2907. *vessels*, E *vessel*.

- Eek Palamon with ful greet compaignye,
- And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910
- With fyr in honde as was that tyme the gyse
- To do the office of funeral servyse.
- Heigh labour, and ful greet apparaillynge,
 Was at the service and the fyr makynge,
 That with his grené tope the heven raughte, 2915
 And twenty fadme of brede the armés straughte,
 This is to seyn the bowés weren so brode.
 Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode,
 But how the fyr was makéd up on highte,
 And eek the namés that the trees highte,— 2920
 As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popeler,
 Wylugh, elm, plane, asshe, box, chasteyn, lynde,
 laurer,
 Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltre,—
 How they weren feld shal nat be toold for me ;
 Ne hou the goddés ronnen up and doun, 2925
 Disherited of hire habitacioun,
 In whiche they woneden in reste and pees,
 Nymphés, fawnes, and amadriades ;
 • Ne hou the beestés and the briddés alle
 • Fledden for feré, whan the wode was falle ; 2930
 | Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
 | That was nat wont to seen the sonné bright ;
 • Ne how the fyr was couchéd first with stree,

2915. *raughte*, reached.2916. *fadme of brede*, fathoms
in breadth.*straughte*, stretched.2918. *stree*, straw.2920. *that*, H⁸ *how*.2922. *chasteyn*, chestnut.2924. *feld*, E. *field*.2927. *woneden*, lived.2933. *couchéd*, laid.

- And thanne with dryé stokkès, cloven a thre,
 · And thanne with grené wode and spicerye, 2935
 · And thanne with clooth of gold, and with perrye,
 · And gerlandes, hangynge with ful many a flour,
 · The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour ;
 | Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
 | Ne what richesse aboute his body is, 2940
 | Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
 | Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse,
 | Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
 | Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desire,
 | Ne what jeweles men in the fyre tho caste 2945
 | Whan that the fyr was greet and brenté faste ;
 · Ne how somme caste hir sheeld, and somme hir
 spere,
 · And of hire vestimentz, whiche that they were,
 | And coppès full of wyn, and milk, and blood,
 | Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood ; 2950
 | Ne how the Grekès, with an huge route,
 · Thriës riden al the place aboute
 · Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutynge,
 · And thriës with hir sperès claterynge,
 | And thriës how the ladyes gonné crye, 2955
 | And how that lad was homward Emelye ;
 | Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde,

2934. *stokkes*, H^b *stikkes*.2936. *perrye*, precious stones.2938. *mirre*, myrrh.2943. *whan men made the fyr*,
H *whan sche made*;Corpus³ *whan made*
was.2943. *the*, om. E.2945. *tho*, om. E^b.2952. *Thries*, E *Triës*; H *Thre*
tymes.

- | Ne how that lychéwaké was y-holde
 | Al thilké nyght ; ne how the Grekés pleye
 | The waké-pleyes ; ne kepe I nat to seye 2960
 | Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
 | Ne who that baar hym best in no disjoynt.
 | I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
 | Hoom til Atthenés, whan the pleye is doon ;
 | But shortly to the point thanne wol I wende, 2965
 | And maken of my longé tale an ende.
 · By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres,
 · Al styntyd is the moornyng and the teres
 · Of Grekés, by oon general assent.
 | Thanne seméd me ther was a parlément 2970
 | At Atthenes, upon certein poyntz and caas ;
 | Among the whiché poyntz y-spoken was,
 | To have with certein contrees alliaunce,
 | And have fully of Thebans obeissaunce.
 | For which this noble Thesëus anon 2975
 · Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
 · Unwist of hym what was the cause and why ;
 · But in hise blaké clothés sorwefully
 | He cam at his comandément in hye.
 | Tho senté Thesëus for Emelye. 2980
 · Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
 · And Thesëus abiden hadde a space
 | Er any word cam fram his wisé brest,

2958. *lyche-wake*, corpse-
 watch ; E *lych-wake*.
 H omits the line.

2962. *in no disjoynt*, with no
 disadvantage.
 2976. *Leet*, caused.
 2979. *in hye*, in haste.

Hise eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
 And with a sad visage he sikéd stille, 2985
 And after that right thus he seyde his wille :
 "The Firste Moevere of the cause above,
 Whan he first made the fairé cheyne of love,
 Greet was theeffect and heigh was his entente ;
 Wel wiste he why and what therof he mente, 2990
 For with that fairé cheyne of love he bond
 The fyr, the eyr, the water and the lond,
 In certeyn boundés that they may nat flee.
 That same Prince, and that same Moevere," quod
 he, 2994
 "Hath stablissed in this wrecchéd world adoun .
 Certeyné dayés and duracioun
 To al that is engendrid in this place,
 Over the whiché day they may nat pace,—
 Al mowe they yet tho dayés wel abregge,
 Ther nedeth noght noon auctoritee allegge 3000
 For it is preevéd by experience,
 But that me list declaren my sentence.
 Thanne may men by this ordre wel discerne
 That thilké Moevere stable is and eterne.
 Wel may men knowé, but it be a fool, 3005
 That every part dirryveth from his hool ;

2985. *siked*, sighed.
 2987-3016. *The Firste Moevere*,
 etc. Theseus takes the
 arguments of this speech
 from Boethius, *De Conso-*
latione, bk. ii. met. 8 ;
 bk. iv. pr. 6 ; bk. iii. pr.
 10.

 2994. *and that same Moevere*,
*Heng.*² om. *that* ; Hl.
and moevere eek.

 2997. *al that is*, H *alle that*
er ; Corpus *alle that beth*.
3000. *noght*, om. H².3002. *sentence*, judgment.

- For nature hath nat taken his bigynnyng
 Of no partie ne cantel of a thyng,
 But of a thyng that parfit is and stable,
 Descendynge so, til it be corrupable. 3010
 And therfore of his wisé purveiaunce
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
 That speces of thynges and progressiouns
 Shullen enduren by successiouns,
 And nat eterne, withouten any lye; 3015
 This maystow understonde, and seen at eye.
 " Loo the ook, that hath so long a norisshynge
 From tymé that it first bigynneth sprynge,
 And hath so long a lif as we may see,
 Yet at the lasté wasted is the tree. 3020
 " Considereth eek how that the hardé stoon
 Under oure feet, on which we trede and goon,
 Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye;
 The brodé ryver somtyme wexeth dreye;
 The greté tourés se we wane and wende; 3025
 Thanne may ye se that al this thyng hath ende.
 " Of man and womman seen we wel also,
 That nedeth in oon of thisé termés two,
 This is to seyn, in youthe or ellés age,
 He moot be deed, the kyng as shal a page; 3030
 Som in his bed, som in the depé see,
 Som in the largé feeld, as men may se;

3007. *nat*, om. E².3008. *ne*, from H; E⁴, *or of*;
*Corpus*², *nor of*.
cantel, portion.3015. H *And nat eterne be*
withoute lye.3016. *at*, E *it*.3025. *tourés*, H⁶ *townes*.

| Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilké weye :

| Thanne may I seyn that al this thyng moot deye.

“ What maketh this but Juppiter, the kyng, 3035

The which is prince, and cause of allé thyng,

Converynge al unto his propre welle,

From which it is dirryvèd, sooth to telle ?

· And here agayns no creature on lyve,

· Of no degree, availleth for to stryve. 3040

· “ Thanne is it wysdom, as it thynketh me,

· To maken vertu of necessitee,

And take it weel that we may not eschue

And namely that to us alle is due.

| And who so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye, 3045

And rebel is to hym that al may gye ;

And certainly a man hath moost honour,

To dyen in his excellence and flour,

Whan he is siker of his goodè name. 3049

Thanne hath he doon his freend, ne hym, no shame,

And gladder oghte his freend been of his deeth,

Whan with honour up yolden is his breeth,

Than whan his name apallèd is for age,

For al forgotten is his vassellage.

Thanne is it best, as for a worthy fame, 3055

| To dyen whan that he is best of name.

3034. *that*, om. E².

3036. *The which*, E² *that*.

3037. *welle*, source.

3046. *gye*, guide.

3047 *sqg.* *And certainly*, etc.

Just as I come to these fine lines (Feb. 1892) I find them very happily applied to the too early

death of Prof. Bernhard Ten Brink, the value of whose life-work no Chaucer-student can easily over-estimate.

3052. *yolden*, yielded.

3053. *apalled*, made feeble.

3054. *vassellage*, good service.

3056. *that he*, H *a man*.

"The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
 Why grucchen we, why have we hevynesse
 That goode Arcite, of chivalrië flour,
 Departed is with duetee and honour 3060
 Out of this foule prisoun of this lyf?
 Why grucchen heere his cosyn and his wyf
 Of his welfare that loved hem so weel?
 Kan he hem thank?—Nay, God woot, never a
 deel—
 That bothe his soule and eek hem self offende, 3065
 And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.

"What may I conclude of this longë serye,
 But after wo, I rede us to be merye,
 And thanken Juppiter of al his grace?
 And er that we departen from this place 3070
 I redë that we make of sorwës two
 O parfit joyë, lastyngë everemo.
 And looketh now, wher moost sorwe is her-inne,
 Ther wol we first amenden and bigynne."

"Suster," quod he, "this is my fulle assent, 3075
 With all thavys heere of my parlément,
 That gentil Palamon, thyn owene knyght,
 That serveth yow with willë, herte, and myght,
 And evere hath doon, syn that ye first hym knewe,
 That ye shul of your grace upon hym rewe, 3080
 And taken hym for housbonde and for lord ;

3059. *flour*, H⁴ *the flour*.

3064. *Kan he hem thank*, does
he thank them?

3067. *conclude*, E *concluden*.

3071. *that*, om. E⁶.

3072. *O*, one.

3076. *thavys*, the advice.

3077. *thyn*, H⁶ *your*.

Lene me youre hond, for this is oure accord.
Lat se now of youre wommanly pitee ;
He is a kynges brother sone, *pardee*,
And though he were a pouré bachelere, 3085
Syn he hath servéd yow so many a yeer
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It mosté been considered, leeveth me,
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right."

Thanne seyde he thus to Palamon ful right :

"I trowe ther nedeth litel sermonyng 3091
 To maké yow assenté to this thyng ;
 Com neer, and taak youre lady by the hond."
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
That highté matrimoigne, or mariage, 3095
By al the conseil and the baronage ;
And thus with allé blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye,
And God, that al this wyde world hath wrought,
Sende hym his love that it hath deere aboght, 3100
For now is Palamon in allé wele,
Lyvyng in blisse, in richesse, and in heele ;
And Emelye hym loveth so tendrely,
 And he hire serveth al-so gentilly,
That neveré was ther no word hem bitwene 3105
Of jalousie or any oother tene.

Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye,
 And God save al this fairé compaignye. *Amen.*

3082. *Lene*, give.

3088. *leeveth*, believe.

3089. *to passen right*, to go
beyond mere justice.

3100. *hath*, om. E.

3104. *al-so*, E⁸ *so*.

3106. *tene*, sorrow.

*Heere folwen the wordes bitwene the Hoost and
the Millere*

Whan that the Knyght had thus his tale y-toold,
In al the route ne was ther yong ne oold 3110
That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
And worthy for to drawen to memorie,
And namely the gentils everichon.

Oure Hoosté lough and swoor, "So moot I gon,
This gooth aright; unbokeled is the male; 3115
Lat se now who shal telle another tale,
For trewely the game is wel bigonne.
Now telleth on, sire Monk, if that ye konne
~~Sumwhat to quite with the Knyghrs tale."~~

The Millere, that for-dronken was al pale, 3120
So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abyde no man for his curteisie,
But in Pilátés voys he gan to crie,
And swoor by armés, and by blood and bones,
"I kan a noble tale for the nones, 3126
~~With which I wol now quite the Knyghtés tale."~~

Oure Hoosté saugh that he was dronke of ale,
And seyde, "Abyd, Robyn, my leevé brother,
~~Som bettre man shal telle us first another;~~ 3130

3112. *for to drawen to, H to be
drawen in.*

3114. *lough, H tho lough.*

3115. *aright, H right wel.*

3117. *the, H this.*

3122. *avalen, doff.*

3124. *in Pilates voys, the rant-
ing tone assigned to
Pilate in the Miracle
Plays.*

3128. *saugh that he was dronke,
H saugh wel how dronke
he was.*

Abyde, and lat us werken thriftily."

"By Goddès soule," quod he, "that wol nat I,
For I wol speke, or ellès go my wey."

Oure Hoost answerde, "Tel on a devele wey!
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome." 3135

"Now herkneth," quod the Millere, "alle and
some;

But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun;
And, therefore, if that I mysspeke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I you preye; 3140
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf,
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightès cappe."

The Reve answerde and seyde, "Stynt thy
clappe!

Iat be thy lewéd, dronken harlotrye; 3145
It is a synne, and eek a greet folye
To apeyren any man, or hym defame,
And eek to bryngen wyvès in swich fame;
Thou mayst ynogh of othere thyngès seyn."

This dronké Millere spak ful soone ageyn 3150
And seyde, "Levé brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf he is no cokéwold,
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon,
Ther been ful goodè wyvès many oon, 3154
And evere a thousand goode ageyns oon badde;
That knowestow wel thyself, but if thou madde.

3138. *it*, H *wel*.

3140. *Wyte*, blame.
you, om. E².

3147. *apeyren*, depreciate.

3148. *swich fame*, H *yllname*.

Why artow angry with my talé now?

I have a wyf *pardee*, as wel as thow,

Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plough,

Taken upon me mooré than ynogh; 3160

Though that thou deme thiself that thou be oon,

I wol bilevé wel that I am noon.

An housbonde shal nat been inquisityf

Of Goddés pryvêtee, nor of his wyf;

So he may fyndé Goddés foyssoun there, 3165

Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere."

What sholde I mooré seyn, but this Millere

He nolde his wordés for no man forbere,

But told his cherlès tale in his manere.

Mathynketh that I shal reherce it heere; 3170

And therfore every gentil wight I preye,

For Goddés love, demeth nat that I seye

Of yvel entente, but for I moot reherce

Hir talés allé, be they bettre or werse,

Or ellés falsen som of my mateére? 3175

~~And therfore, who so list it nat-y-heere,~~

Turne over the leef and chese another tale;

For he shal fynde ynowe, bothe grete and smale,

3161. *Though*, etc. : this reading of H (partly supported by Camb.) is much better than the "As demen of myself that I were oon" of E^b.

3165. *foysoun*, increase.

3167. *moore seyn but this*, H
seye but that this proud.

3172. *demeth*, H as *deme*; Heng.⁴ place *demeth* *noght* at beginning of the line.

3173. *for*, E³ *that*.

3174. *Hir tales alle, be they*, etc., H *Here wordes alle, al be they*, etc.

3178. *bothe*, om. E⁶.

Of storial thyng that toucheth gentillesse,
 And eek moralitee, and hoolynesse,— 3180
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys.
 The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this,
 So was the Reve, and othere manye mo,
 And harlotrie they tolden bothé two.
 Avyseth yow, putteth me out of blame ; 3185
 And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game.

MILLER'S TALE

Heere bigynneth The Millere his Tale

churl
 Whilom ther was dwellynge at Oxenford
 A riché gnof, that gestés heeld to bord,
 And of his craft he was a carpenter.
 With hym ther was dwellynge a poure scoler, 3190
 Hadde lernéd art, but al his fantasye
 Was turnéd for to lerne astrologye,
 And koude a/certeyn of conclusiouns,
 To demen by interrogaciouns,
 If that men askéd hym in certain houres 3195
 Whan that men sholde have droghte or ellés
 shoures,
 Or if men askéd hym what sholde bifalle
 Of every thyng, I may nat rekene hem alle.

The Millere his Tale: no
 original or analogue has
 been discovered for this
 story, and there is no
 reason to doubt that it is

of Chaucer's own inven-
 tion.

3188. *gnof*, churl.

heeld to bord, lodged.

This clerk was clepéd hendé Nicholas.
 Of deerné love he koude, and of solas, 3200
 And ther-to he was sleigh and ful privee,
 And lyk a mayden meké for to see.
 A chambré hadde he in that hostelrye
 Allone, withouten any compaignye,
 Ful fetisly y-dight, with herbés swoote, 3205
 And he hymself as sweete as is the roote
 Of lycorys, or any cetéwale.
 His Almageste, and bookés grete and smale,
 His astrelabie, longynge for his art,
 His augrym stonés, layen faire apart, 3210
 On shelvés couchéd at his beddés heed,
 His presse y-covered with a faldyng reed,
 And all above ther lay a gay sautrie,
 On which he made a-nyghtés melodie
 So swetely, that al the chambré rong, 3215
 And *Angelus ad Virginem*, he song ;

3199. *hende*, gentle.

3200. *deerne*, secret.

3201. *ther-to*, H *ther-with*.

3205. *fetisly y-dight*, neatly set in order.

3207. *celetwale*, the herb valerian.

3208. *Almageste*, the chief work of the astronomer Ptolemy, called by the Greeks Μεγάλη Σύνταξις τῆς Ἀστρονομίας, a name which the Arabs by substituting a superlative turned into *Al-megiste*, or *Almagest*.

3209. *astrelabie*, a circular in-

strument for observing the stars, Chaucer wrote a treatise on its use.

3210. *augrym stones*, counters; *augrym* is a corruption from the Arabic *Algorithm*, numeration.

3212. *faldyng*, a coarse cloth.

3213. *sautrie*, a psaltery.

3216. *Angelus ad Virginem*, the music of a 13th century chant to these words is extant at the British Museum, and was used by Dr. Villiers Stanford in his opera *Savonarola*.

And after that he song the "kynges noote";
 Ful often blessed was his myrie throte,
 And thus this sweeté clerk his tymé spenté
 After his freendés fyndyng and his renté. 3220

This carpenter hadde wedded newe a wyf,
 Which that he lovéde mooré than his lyf;
 Of eightéteené yeer she was of age.
 Jalous he was, and heeld hire narwe in cage,
For she was yong and wylde, and he was old, 3225
And demed hymself been lik a cokéwold.
 He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,—
That bad man sholde wedde his simylitude.
 Men sholde wedden after hire estaat,
For youthe and elde is often at debaat; 3230
But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
 He moste endure, as oother folk, his care.
Fair was this yongé wyf, and therwithal,
As any wezele, hir body gent and smal.

3217. Of the "kynges noote" nothing appears to be known.

3223. *eighteteene*, written in E⁵ in numerals.

3227. *He knew nat Catoun*: "The calling of this author *Caton* shews that he was more studied in French than in Latin. Who he was, or of what age, is uncertain, but his authority, four or five hundred years ago, seems to have been as great as if he had been the famous Censor of Rome. However, the maxim here

alluded to is not properly one of Cato's; but I find it in a kind of Supplement to the Moral Distichs, entitled *Facetus* int. Auctores octo morales, Lugd. 1538, cap. iiii.

"Duc tibi prole parem spon-
 sam moresque venustam,
 Si cum pace velis vitam
 deducere justam"

(Tyrwhitt). The sentiment is as old as the Seven Sages.

3228. *sholde*, Corpus and Lansdowne MSS. omit.

3231. *fallen in*, H brought into.

3232. *folk*, H doon.

A ceynt she werede, y-barréd al of silk ; 3235
 A barmclooth eek, as whit as morné milk,
 Upon hir lendés, ful of many a goore ;
 Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore,
 And eek bihyndé, on hir coler aboute,
 Of colblak silk withinne and eek withoute. 3240
 The tapés of hir whité voluper
 Were of the samé suyte of hir coler ;
 Hir filet brood, of silk and set ful hye ;
 And sikerly she hadde a likerous eye.
 Ful smale y-pulléd were hire browés two, 3245
 And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.
 She was ful mooré blisful on to see
 Than is the newé pereionetté tree,
 And softer than the wolfe is of a wether ;
 And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether, 3250
 Tasseled with grene and perléd with latoun.
 In al this world, to seken up and doun,
 There nas no man so wys that koudé thenche
 So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
 Ful brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe 3255
 Than in the Tour the noble y-forgéd newe.

3235. *ceynt*, girdle.3236. *barmclooth*, apron.
eek, om. E⁸.3237. *lendes*, loins.
goore, gusset.3241. *tapés*, ribbands.
voluper, cap.3248. *the newe pereionette tree*,
the pear-tree in spring.3251. *perléd with latoun*, with
brass knobs.3253. *thenche*, think, imagine.3254. *popelote*, puppet.3256. *Tour*, i.e. the Tower of
London, where the mint
was.*the noble*, a gold coin
(6s. 8d.), first minted
by Edward III.

But of hir song it was as loude and yerne
 As any swalwé chitteryng on a berne.
 Therto she koudé skippe and maké game,
 As any kyde, or calf, folwyng his dame. 3260
 Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
 Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
 Wynsyng she was, as is a joly colt ;
 Long as a mast and uprighte as a bolt.
 A brooch sche baar upon hir love coler, 3265
 As brood as is the boos of a bokeler ;
 Hir shoes were lacéd on hir leggès hye ;
 She was a prymerole, a piggesnye
 For any lord, to leggen in his bedde,
 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde. 3270

Now, sire, and eft, sire, so bifel the cas,
 That on a day this hendé Nicholas,
 Fil with this yongé wyf to rage and pleye
 Whil that hir housbonde was at Oséneye,
 As clerkés ben ful subtile and ful queynte, 3275
 And privély he caughte hire by the queynte,
 And seyde, y-wis, " But if ich have my wille,
 For deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille ;"
 And heeld hire hardé by the haunché bones,

3257. *yerne*, brisk.3258. *chitteryng*, E⁴ *sittyng*.
berne, barn.3261. *bragot*, ale and mead
mixed.
meeth, mead.3263. *Wynsyng*, lively.3266. *boos*, boss.3268. *prymerole*, primrose.3268. *piggesnye*, lit. "pig's eye,"
a term of endearment,
cp. *ocellus*.3269. *to leggen*, I have *liggyng*.3274. *Oseneye*, Osney, a village
near Oxford.3278. *deerne*, secret.*lemman*, sweetheart.
spille, perish.

And seyde, "Lemman, love me al atones, 3280
Or I wol dyen, also God me save!"

And she sproong, as a colt doth in the trave,
And with hir heed sche wryed faste away,
And seyde, "I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey!
Why, lat be!" quod she, "lat be, Nicholas! 3285
Or I wol crie, 'out, Harrow,' and 'Allas!'
Do wey youre handés, for your curteisye!"

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profréd hym so faste,
That she hir love hym graunted atté laste, 3290
And swoor hir ooth, by Seint Thomas of Kent,
That she wol been at his comandément
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espie.
"Myn housbonde is so ful of jalousie,
That but ye wayté wel and been privee, 3295
I woot right wel I nam but deed," quod she;
"Ye mosté been ful deerne, as in this cas."

"Nay, ther-of care thee noght," quod Nicholas.
"A clerk hadde litherly biset his whyle
But if he koude a carpenter bigyle." 3300
And thus they been accorded and y-sworn
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.

Whan Nicholas had doon thus everideel,
And thakkéd hire aboute the lendés weel,

3281. *dyen, also, H dye, as wysly.*

3282. *trave, a frame for unruly horses, H and she sprang out as doth a colt in trave.*

3283. *wryed, twisted.*

3285. *she, E ich by mistake. Nicholas, H thou Nicholas.*

3289. *hym, E hire.*

3299. *litherly, etc., badly employed his time.*

3304. *thakked, stroked.*

He kist hire sweete, and taketh his sawtrie, 3305
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie.

Thanne fil it thus, that to the paryssh chirche,
Christès owenè werkès for to wirche,
This goodè wyf went on an haliday ;
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day, 3310
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.

Now was ther of that chirche a parissch clerk,
The which that was y-cleped Absolon ;
Crul was his heer and as the gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanné, large and brode, 3315
Ful streight and evene lay his joly shode.
~~His rode was reed, hise eyen greye as goos ;~~
With Powlès wyndow corven on his shoos,
In hoses rede he wentè fetisly.
Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely, 3320
Al in a kirtel of a lyght waget,
Ful faire and thikké been the poyntès set ;
And therupon he hadde a gay surplys,
As whit as is the blosme upon the rys.

3311. *leet*, left.

3314. *Crul*, curly.

3315. *strouted*, spread out.

3316. *shode*, parting.

3318. *Powles wyndow*, the reference is to the open-work tracery in the fashionable shoes of the time. If the reading *wyndow* of E⁵ is right the allusion may be specific to shoes with the pattern of the great Rose window at Old

St. Paul's cut in them ;
H² *wyndowes*.

3318. *on*, H² *in*.

3319. *hoses*, Petworth² *hosen*,
H *his hoses*.
fetisly, neatly.

3321. *lyght*, H *fyn*.
waget or *wachet*, blue cloth.

3322. *Ful faire*, etc. ; H has the totally different line, *Schapien with goores in the newe get*.

3324. *rys*, twig.

A myrie child he was, so God me save, 3325
 Wel koude he laten blood and clippe and shave
 And maken a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.
 In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce
 (After the scole of Oxenfordé tho),
 And with his leggés casten to and fro, 3330
 And pleyen songés on a small rubible ;
 Ther-to he song som tyme a loud quynbyle,
 And as wel koude he pleye on his giterne.
 In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
 That he ne visited with his solas, 3335
 Ther any gaylard tappesteré was.
 But, sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous
 Of fartyng, and of spechê daungerous.

This Absolon, that jolif was and gay,
Gooth with a sencer on the hallday, 3340
Sensynge the wyvés of the parisshe faste,
And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
And namely on this carpenteris wyf.
To loke on hire hym thoughte a myrie lyf,
She was so propre, and sweete, and likerous. 3345
I dar wel seyn if she hadde been a mous,
And he a cat, he wold hire hente anon.
This parissh clerk, this joly Absolon,
Hath in his herté swich a love longyne,

3329. *After, etc., i.e. clumsily.*
Oxenforde, E² Oxenford.

3331. *rubible, a kind of violin.*

3332. *quynbyle, a part sung or*
played a fifth above the
air.

3336. *gaylard tappestere, merry*
barmaid.

3337. *squaymous, squeamish.*

3340. *sencer, a censor.*

3347. *hente, seize.*

That of no wyf ne took he noon offrynge ; 3350
 For curteisie, he seyde, he woldé noon.

The moone, whan it was nyght, ful brighté
 shoon,

And Absolon his gyterne hath y-take,
 For paramours he thoghté for to wake ;
 And forth he gooth, jolif and amorous, 3355
 Til he cam to the carpenterés hous,
 A litel after cokkés hadde y-crowe,
 And dresséd hym up by a shotwyndowe,
 That was upon the carpenteris wal.
 He syngeth in his voys gentil and smal : 3360
*"Now, deeré lady, if thy willé be,
 I prayé yow that ye wole thynke on me,"*
 Ful wel acordaunt to his gyternynge.

This carpenter awook, and herdé synge,
 And spak unto his wyf, and seyde anon, 3365
 "What, Alison, herestow nat Absolon,
 That chaunteth thus under oure bourés wal?"
 And she answerde hir housbonde therwithal,
 "Yis, God woot, John, I heere it every del."

This passeth forth ; what wol ye bet than weel?
 Fro day to day this joly Absolon 3371
 So woweth hire that hym is wo bigon ;
 He waketh al the nyght and al the day,

3350. *ne, om. E⁶.*

3352. *whan it was nyght, ful,
 H at night ful clere and.*

3354. *thoghte for to wake, H
 seyde he wolde awake.*

3357. *cokkes, H the cok.*

3358. *shotwyndowe, a window
 with a bolt or shot.*

3359. *upon, H under.*

3362. *praye, E⁴ pray and prey.
 thynke, H rewe.*

3367. *boures wal, H boure smal.*

3370. *bet, better.*

He kembeth hise lokkés brode, and made hym gay,
 He woweth hire by meenés and brocage, 3375
 And swoor he woldé been hir owene page ;
 He syngeth, brokkyng as a nyghtyngale ;
 He sente hire pyment, meeth, and spicéd ale,
 And wafres pipyng hoot, out of the gleede,
 And for she was of toune he profreth meede ; 3380
 For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,
 And somme for strokes, and somme for gentillesse.

Somtyme to shewe his lightnesse and maistyre
 He pleyeth Heródés, on a scaffold hye,
 But what availleth hym, as in this cas ? 3385
 She loveth so this hendé Nicholas,
 That Absolon may blowe the bukkés horn,
 He ne haddé for his labour but a scorn,
 And thus she maketh Absolon hire ape
 And al his earnest turneth til a jape. 3390
 Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,

3374. *He kembeth, H To kembe,*
 an amusing but unlikely
 variant.

3375. *by meenes and brocage,*
 by go - betweenes and
 brokery ; H, *mené.*

3377. *brokkyng, warbling ? ; H,*
crowyng.

3378. *pyment, spiced wine.*

3379. *gleede, red coal.*

3380. *And for, H For that.*
profreth, H profred.

3382. *strokes, note in E³*
"unde Ovidius, Ictibus
agrestis."

3384. *He pleyeth Herodes, etc.,*
 the Miracle Plays were
 at first chiefly acted by

clerks ; the stage or
 "scaffold" often had
 three compartments to
 represent Heaven, Earth
 and Hell. *Herodes* in
 some MSS. is corrupted
 into *herawdes* (heralds) |

3384. *on, E⁸ upon.*

3387. *blowe the bukkés horn, a*
 phrase meaning "have
 his trouble for nothing."

3391. *this proverbe.* Tyrwhitt
 quotes *Conf. Aman.* bk.
 iii. : "An^olde sawe is :
 who that is slygh | In
 placé wher he may be
 nygh, | He maketh the
 ferré leefé loth."

Men seyn right thus, "Alwey the nyé slye
 Maketh the ferré leevé to be looth ;"
 For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,
 By-cause that he fer was from hire sighte, 3395
 This nyé Nicholas stood in his lighte.

Now bere thee wel, thou hendé Nicholas,
 For Absolon may waille and synge, allas !
 And so bifel it on a Saterdag
 This carpenter was goon til Osénay, 3400
 And hendé Nicholas and Alisoun
 Acorded been to this conclusioun,
 That Nicholas shal shapen hym a wyle
 This sely, jalous housbonde to bigyle ;
 And, if so be the gamé wente aright, 3405
 She sholdé slepen in his arm al nyght,
 For this was his desir and hire also.
 And right anon, withouten wordés mo,
 This Nicholas no lenger woldé tarie,
 But dooth ful softe unto his chambré carie 3410
 Bothe mete and drynké for a day or tweye ;
 And to hire housbonde bad hire for to seye,
 If that he axéd after Nicholas,
 She sholdé seye she nysté where he was ;
 Of al that day she saugh hym nat with eye ; 3415
 She trowéd that he was in maladye,

3396. *nye*, om. H.
stood, H *hath stonden*.

3400. *til*, H³ *to*.

3404. *sely*, innocent.

3405. *be the*, H *were this*.

3407. *his . . . hire*, H³ *hire*
. . . his.

3414. *nyste*, H *wiste nat*.

3416. *that he was in*, H *he*
were falle in som.

For for no cry hir maydè koude hym calle,
 He nolde answer for thyng that myghte falle.
 This passeth forth al thilkè Saterdag
 That Nicholas stille in his chambrè lay, 3420
 And eet and sleepe, or didè what hym leste,
 Til Sonday that the sonnè gooth to reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet merveyلة
 Of Nicholas, or what thyng myghte hym eyle,
 And seyde, "I am adrad, by Seint Thomas 3425
 It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas.
 God shildè that he deyde sodeynly;
 This world is now ful tikel sikerly;
 I saugh to day a cors y-born to chirche,
 That now on Monday last I saugh hym wirche. 3430

"Go up," quod he unto his knave anoon,
 "Clepe at his dore or knokkè with a stoon;
 Looke how it is and tel me boldely."

This knavè gooth him up ful sturdily
 And at the chambrè dorè whil he stood, 3435
 He cride and knokkèd as that he were wood,—
 "What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholay?
 How may ye slepen al the longè day?"

But al for noght, he herdè nat a word.
 An hole he foond ful lowe upon a bord, 3440
 Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe,
 And at that hole he lookèd in ful depe,
 And at the laste he hadde of hym a sighte.

3417. *For for no cry hir mayde,*
H For no cry that hir
mayde, to be taken with
 next line.

3424. *myghte,* H *may.*
 3427. *God skilde,* God forbid.
 3428. *tikel,* frail.
 3435. *whil,* E^s *whil that.*

This Nicholas sat gapyng evere uprighte,
 As he had kikéd on the newé moone. 3445
 Adoun he gooth and tolde his maister soone
 In what array he saugh this ilké man.

This carpenter to blessen hym bigan,
 And seyde, "Help us, Seinte Frydeswyde!
 A man woot litel what hym shal bityde; 3450
 This man is fallé with his astromye
 In som woodnesse, or in som agonye.
 I thoghte ay wel how that it sholdé be,
 Men sholde nat knowe of Goddès pryveteé.
 Ye, blesséd be alwey a lewéd man, 3455
 That noght but oonly his bilevé kan.
 So ferde another clerk with astromye;
 He walkéd in the feeldés, for to pryé
 Upon the sterrés, what ther sholde bifalle,
 Til he was in a marlè pit y-falle; 3460
 He saugh nat that. But yet by Seint Thomas,
 Me reweth soore of hendé Nicholas!
 He shal be ratéd of his studiyng,
 If that I may, by Jhesus, hevene kyng!

"Get me a staf, that I may underspore, 3465
 Whil that thou, Robyn, hevest of the dore:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3444. <i>gapyng</i> , E ³ <i>capyng</i> . | in 3457 it spoils the metre. |
| 3445. <i>kikéd</i> , peeped; H, <i>loked</i> . | |
| 3447. <i>this</i> , E ³ <i>that</i> . | 3452. <i>woodnesse</i> , madness. |
| 3449. <i>Seinte Frydeswyde</i> , still the patron saint of one of the Oxford parishes. | 3456. <i>his bileve kan</i> , knows his Creed. |
| 3451. <i>astromye</i> , a corruption of "astronomye"; the latter word is the reading of H ⁴ , but both here and | 3457. <i>another clerk</i> , Thales. |
| | 3460. <i>marle pit</i> , E <i>marleput</i> . |
| | 3465. <i>underspore</i> , use leverage. |
| | 3466. <i>of</i> , off. |

He shal out of his studyng, as I gesse."
 And to the chambré dore he gan hym dresse ;
 His knavè was a strong carl, for the noones,
 And by the haspe he haaf it of atones, 3470
 Into the floor the dorè fil anon.
 This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,
 And evere gapèd upward into the eir.
 This carpenter wende he were in despeir,
 And hente hym by the sholdrès myghtily 3475
 And shook hym harde and cridè spitously,
 "What, Nicholay ! what how ! what, looke adoun !
 Awake ! and thenk on Cristès passioun !
 I crouché thee from elvès and fro wightes."
 Therwith the nyghtspel seyde he anonrightes, 3480
 On fourè halvès of the hous aboute,
 And on the thressshfold of the dore withoute :
 "Jhesu Crist and Seïnt Benedight,
 Blesse this hous from every wikked wight
 For nyghtès veye the white Pater noster. 3485
 Where wentestow, Seïnt Petres soster ?"

3470. *haaf*, heaved.
of, H⁴ *up*.

3471. *Into*, H *And in*.
fil, H *fil down*.

3477. *what* (3rd), H *man* ;
Heng,^b *om*.

3479. *crouche*, sign with the
cross.

3481. *On*, H *On the*.

3483. *Jhesu*, H *Lord Jhesu*.

3485. *For nyghtes*, etc. The
 hopelessness of the next
 line makes it unlikely
 that this can be easily

emended. Tyrwhitt reads: *Fro
 the nyghtes mare the wite pater-
 noster* (may pater-noster defend
 thee from night-mare); Morris :
*Fro nyghtes mare werye the
 with pater-noster* (guard thyself
 with pater-noster). But a charm
 of the 16th century quoted by
 Mr. Gilman runs :

"White Pater Noster, St. Peter's
 brother,
 What hast thou in one hand?
 White-Book Leaves.
 What hast i' th' other? Heaven
 Gate keys.

And attè laste this hendé Nicholas
 Gan for to siké soore, and seyde, "Allas!
 Shal al this world be lost eftsoonés now?"

This carpenter answerdè, "What seystow? 3490
 What, thyнк on God, as we doon, men that
 swynke."

This Nicholas answerdè, "Fecche me drynke;
 And after wol I speke, in pryvètee,
 Of certeyн thyng that toucheth me and thee;
 I wol telle it noon oother man certeyн." 3495

This carpenter goth down and comth ageyn,
 And broghte of myghty ale a largé quart,
 And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,
 This Nicholas his doré fasté shette
 And down the carpenter by hym he sette. 3500

He seyde, "John, myн hoosté, lief and deere,
 Thou shalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere
 That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye,
 For it is Cristés conseil that I seye;
 And if thou tellé man thou art forlore, 3505
 For this vengaucé thou shalt han therfore,
 That if thou wreyé me thou shalt be wood."

Open Heaven Gates and steike
 Hell Gates,
 And let every crysom child creep
 to its own mother:
 White Pater Noster. Amen."

If this be genuine the *white*
 must stand. The text with
werye for *verye* might perhaps
 mean "White Pater Noster
 defend thee for the night."

3486. *wentestow, H wonest thou.*

3487. *this, om. H.*

3488. *sike, sigh.*

3489. *this, H⁶ the.*

3494. *me and thee, H⁴ thee and
 me.*

3499. *faste shette, etc., H gan to
 schitte, And dedethis car-
 penter down by him sitte.*

3507. *wood, mad.*

"Nay, Crist forbede it, for his hooly blood,"
 Quod tho this sely man, "I nam no labbe,
 Ne, though I seye, I am nat lief to gabbe ; 3510
 Sey what thou wolt, I shal it nevere telle
 To child ne wyf, by hym that harwéd helle !"

"Now, John," quod Nicholas, "I wol nat lye,
 I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
 As I have looked in the mooné bright, 3515
 That now a Monday next, at quarter nyght,
 Shal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,
 That half so greet was nevere Noees flood.
 This world," he seyde, "in lassé than an hour
 Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour ; 3520
 Thus schal mankyndé drenche and lese hir lyf."

This carpenter answerde, "Allas, my wyf !
 And shal she drenche? Allas, myn Alisoun !"
 For sorwe of this he fil almoost adoun,
 And seyde, "Is ther no remedie in this cas?" 3525

"Why, yis, for Gode," quod hendé Nicholas,
 "If thou wolt werken aftir loore and reed ;
 Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed,
 For thus seith Salomoun, that was ful trewe,
 'Werk al by conseil and thou shalt nat rewe ;' 3530
 And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
 I undertake, withouten mast and seyl,

3510. *Ne, though I seye, H*
though I it seye.

3512. *harwed*, devastated.

3516. *a Monday, H² on Mon-*
day.

3519. *in lasse, H more ; Camb.*
in more.

3520. *Shal al be dreynt, H Shal*
ben i-dreynt.

dreynt, drowned.

3521. *hir, H his.*

3530. *al, om. H.*

Yet shal I saven hire and thee and me.
 Hastow nat herd hou savéd was Noé,
 Whan that oure Lord hadde warnéd hym biforn
 That al the world with water sholde be lorn?" 3536

"Yis," quod this carpenter, "ful yoore ago."

"Hastou nat herd," quod Nicholas, "also,
 The sorwe of Noé with his felaweshipe
 Er that he myghté brynge his wyf to shipe? 3540
 Hym hadde be levere, I dar wel undertake,
 At thilké tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
 That she hadde had a shipe hir-self allone.
 And therfore, woostou what is best to doone?
 This asketh haste, and of an hastif thyng 3545
 Men may nat preche or maken tariyng.

"Anon go gete us faste into this in
 A knedyng trogh, or ellis a kyméllyn,
 For ech of us, but loke that they be large,
 In whiche we mowé swymme as in a barge, 3550
 And han ther-inne vitailé suffisant
 But for a day,—fy on the remenant,—
 The water shal aslake and goon away
 Abouté pryme upon the nexté day.
 But Robyn may nat wite of this, thy knave, 3555
 Ne eek thy maydè Gille I may nat save ;

3540. *Er that he myghte brynge,
 H that he had or he gat.*
 In the Miracle Plays
 Noah's wife refused to
 be saved without her
 gossips, and when she
 was hauled in broke her
 husband's head.

3548. *kymelyn*, brewing-tub.

3550. *In whiche we mowe
 swymme, H In which
 that we may row.*

3552. *a, H o, one.*

3554. *pryme*, 6 A.M.

Axé nat why, for though thou aské me,
 I wol nat tellen Goddés pryvètee ;
 Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittés madde,
 To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde. 3560
 Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute.
 Go now thy wey and speed thee heer aboute.

“ But whan thou hast for hire and thee and me
 Y-geten us thise knedyng tubbés thre,
 Thanne shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye, 3565
 That no man of oure purveiauncé spye,
 And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,
 And hast oure vitaille faire in hem y-leyd,
 And eek an ax to smyte the corde atwo,
 Whan that the water comth, that we may go ; 3570
 And broke an hole, an heigh upon the gable,
 Unto the gardynward, over the stable,
 That we may frely passen forth oure way,
 Whan that the greté shour is goon away ; 3574
 Thanne schalt thou swymme as myrie, I undertake,
 As dooth the whité doke after hire drake ;
 Thanne wol I clepe ‘ how Alisoun, how John,
 Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon,’
 And thou wolt seyn, ‘ Hayl, maister Nicholay !
 Good morwe, I se thee wel for it is day !’ 3580
 And thanne shul we be lordés al oure lyf
 Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.

“ But of o thyng I warné thee ful right,

3559. *if thy wittes, H if that
 thy witt.*

3566. *spy, H⁴ aspye, espye.*

3572. *Unto, H² Into.*

3575. *schalt thou, E shal I.*

3578. *wol passe, H passeth.*

Be wel avyséd on that ilké nyght
 That we ben entred in to shippés bord, 3585
 That noon of us ne speké nat a word,
 Ne clepe, ne crie, but been in his preyére,
 For it is Goddés owene heesté deere.
 Thy wyf and thou moote hangé fer atwynne,
 For that bitwixé yow shal be no synne, 3590
 Na moore in lookyng than ther shal in deede;
 This ordinance is seyde; so God thee speede,
 Tomorwe at nyght, whan folk ben alle aslepe,
 Into our knedyng tubbés wol we crepe,
 And sitten there, abidyng Goddés grace. 3595
 Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space
 To make of this no lenger sermonyng,—
 Men seyn thus, ‘Sende the wise and sey no thyng;’
 Thou art so wys it needeth nat thee teche,
 Go save oure lyf and that I the biseche.” 3600
 This sely carpenter goth forth his wey;
 Ful ofte he seith “Allas,” and “Weylawey,”
 And to his wyf he tolde his pryveetee,
 And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
 What al this queynte cast was for to seye; 3605
 But nathélees she ferde as she wolde deye,
 And seyde, “Allas! go forth thy wey anon,
 Help us to scape or we been lost echon!

3584. *on*, H *of*.3589. *atwynne*, apart.3593. *folk ben alle*, H *men*
ben.3599. *it needeth nat thee teche*,
E it needeth thee nat to
preche.3605. *queynte cast*, cunning de-
vice.3606. *ferde*, behaved.

I am thy trewe, verray, wedded wyf,
 Go, deeré spouse, and help to save oure lyf ! " 3610
 Lo which a greet thyng is affeccioun !
 Men may dyen of ymaginacioun,
 So depé may impressioun be take.
 This sely carpenter bigynneth quake ;
 Hym thynketh verraily that he may see 3615
 Noëes flood, come walwyng as the see,
 To drenchen Alisoun, his hony deere.
 He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory cheere ;
 He siketh, with ful many a sory swogh ;
 He gooth and geteth hym a knedyng trogh, 3620
 And after that a tubbe and a kymelyn,
 And pryvély he sente hem to his in,
 And heng hem in the roof in pryvêtee.
 His owene hande he made laddrés thre,
 To clymben by the rongés and the stalkes, 3625
 Into the tubbés, hangyng in the balkes ;
 And hem vitailleth, bothé trogh and tubbe,
 With breed and chese and good ale in a jubbe,
 Suffisyng right ynogh as for a day ;
 But er that he hadde maad al this array, 3630
 He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,
 Upon his nede to London for to go ;
 And on the Monday, whan it drow to nyght,

3612. *Men may dyen* (slur *may*),
 H *A man may dye*.

3616. *walwyng*, wallowing ;
 H⁴, *walkyng*.

3619. *swogh*, groan.

3624. *His owene hande*, an

idiom for *with* his own
 hand (as in Cambridge
 MS.).

3624. *he*, om. E ; H *than*.

3626. *balkes*, rafters.

3628. *and* (and), H³ *with*.
jubbe, jug.

He shette his dore withouté candel lyght,
 And dresseth al this thyng as it shal be ; 3635
 And shortly up they clomben allé thre ;
 They sitten stillé, wel a furlong way.

"Now, *Pater noster*, clom," seyde Nicholay ;
 And "Clom," quod John, and "Clom," seyde
 Alisoun.

This carpenter seyde his devocioun, 3640
 And stille he sit and biddeth his preyere,
 Ay waitynge on the reyn, if he it heere.

The dedé sleepe for verray bisynesse
 Fil on this carpenter, right as I gesse
 Abouté corfew tyme, or litel more ; 3645
 For travaille of his goost he groneth soore,
 And eft he routeth, for his heed myslay.
 Doun of the laddré stalketh Nicholay,
 And Alisoun ful softe adoun she spedde ;
 Withouten wordés mo they goon to bedde. 3650
 Ther as the carpenter is wont to lye,
 Ther was the revel and the melodye.
 And thus lith Alison and Nicholas,
 In bisynesse of myrthe and of solas,
 Til that the belle of laudés gan to rynge, 3655
 And frerés in the chauncel gonné synge.

3635. *al this*, E^s *alle*, *all*, *al*.

3637. *a furlong way*, some little time.

3638. *clom*, hush. See l. 3586.

3641. *biddeth*, prays.

3642. *Ay waitynge*, E^s *Awaitynge*.

3643. *verray*, E^s *wery*.

3647. *routeth*, snores.

3649. *she*, H *hir*.

3655. *laudes*, the second service of the day, said between matins (midnight) and prime (6 A.M.), *i.e.* about 3, though theologically at sunrise.

3656. *gonne*, H² *gan to*.

This parissh clerk, this amorous Absolon,
 That is for love alwey so wo bigon,
 Upon the Monday was at Oséneye
 With compaignye, hym to disporte and pleye, 3660
 And axéd upon cas a cloisterer
 Ful prively after John the carpenter.
 And he drough hym a part out of the chirche,
 And seyde, "I noot, I saugh hym heere nat
 wirche

Syn Saterdag; I trow that he be went 3665
 For tymber ther our abbot hath hym sent;
 For he is wont for tymber for to go,
 And dwellen at the grange a day or two;
 Or ellés he is at his hous certeyn;
 Where that he be I kan nat soóthly seyn." 3670

This Absolon ful joly was and light,
 And thoghté, "Now is tyme wake al nyght,
 For sikirly I saugh him nat stiryng
 Aboute his dore, syn day bigan to spryng.
 So moot I thryve I shal, at cökkés crowe, 3675
 Ful prývely go knokke at his wyndowe,
 That stant ful lowe upon his bourés wal.
 To Alison now wol I tellen al
 My love longyng; for yet I shal nat mysse
 That at the lesté wey I shal hire kisse. 3680

3658. *alwey so*, H *so hard and*.3660. *With*, E *With a*.3661. *upon cas*, casually.3662. *John*, om. H.3664. *I noot*, H *nay*.3668. *the grange*, the abbey farm.3672. *tyme wake*, so EH; rest *tyme to wake*.3676. *go*, om. E⁴.3678. *now*, H *than*.

Som maner confort shal I have, parfay.
 My mouth hath icchéd al this longé day,
 That is a signe of kysyng atté leste.
 Al nyght me mette eek I was at a feeste ;
 Therefore I wol goon slepe an houre or tweye, 3685
 And al the nyght thanne wol I wake and pleye."

Whan that the firsté cok hath crowe anon
 Up rist this joly love Absolon,
 And hym arraieth gay, at poynt devys ;
 But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys, 3690
 To smellen sweete, er he hadde kembd his heer.
 Under his tonge a trewé-love he beer,
 For ther-by wende he to ben graciours.
 He rometh to the carpenterès hous,
 And stille he stant under the shot wyndowe,— 3695
 Unto his brist it raughte, it was so lowe,—
 And softe he knokketh with a semy-soun :
 "What do ye, hony comb, sweete Alisoun,
 My fairé bryd, my sweeté cynamome ?
 Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me. 3700
 Wel litel thynken ye upon my wo
 That for youre love I sweté ther I go.
 No wonder is, thogh that I swelte and swete,
 I moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete ;
 Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-longynge, 3705

3684. *me mette*, I dreamed ; H,
I mette.

3689. *at poynt devys*, carefully.

3690. *and*, E *of*.

3692. *a trewe-love*, said to be a

"condiment for sweet-
 ening the breath."

3696. *raughte*, reached.

3697. *knokketh*, H⁴ *cowhith*,
cougheth, coughed.

semy-soun, a low noise.

3702. *swete*, H *swelte*, faint.

That lik a turtel trewe is my moornynge ;
I may nat ete na moore than a mayde."

"Go fro the wyndow, jakkè-fool," she sayde,
"As help me God, it wol nat be, 'com ba me ;'
I love another, and elles I were to blame, 3710
Wel bet than thee, by Jhesu, Absolon.

Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey !"

"Allas," quod Absolon, "and weylawey,
That trewè love was evere so yvel biset ! 3715
Thanne kyssè me, syn it may be no bet,
For Jhesus love, and for the love of me."

"Wiltow thanne go thy wey ?" therwith quod she.

"Ye certès, lemman," quod this Absolon.

"Thanne make thee redy," quod she, "I come
anon," 3720

And unto Nicholas she seydè stille,

"Now hust and thou shalt laughen al thy fille."

This Absolon doun sette hym on his knees,
And seydè, "I am lord at alle degrees,
For after this I hope ther cometh moore. 3725
Lemman, thy grace, and sweetè bryd, thyn oore."

The wyndow she undoth, and that in haste,

3709. '*com ba me*,' come kiss me. According to Tyrwhitt, "some of the best MS." read *com bame*; E² have *com pa me*, *com pame*, *compame*; H, *com paine*; Lansd. *I will nouht be compaine*, an impossible rhyme in Chaucer.

3716. *kyssè*, H *kisseth*, more humbly.
bet, better.

3718. *therwith*, om. E.

3721, 3722. These two lines occur only in E.

3726. *oore*, compassion.

3727. *undoth*, H *undyd*.

"Have do," quod she, "com of, and speed the faste,
Lest that oure neighëborës thee espie."

This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful drie : 3730
Dirk was the nyght as pich, or as the cole,
And at the wyndow out she pitte hir hole,
And Absolon hym fil no bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers,
Ful savourly, er he was war of this. 3735

Abak he stirte, and thoughte it was amys,
For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd.
He felte a thyng al rough and long y-herd,
And seyde, "Fy, allas, what have I do?"
"Tehee!" quod she, and clapte the wyndow to, 3740
And Absolon gooth forth a sory pas.

"A berd, a berd!" quod hendë Nicholas,
"By Goddës corps, this game goth faire and weel."
This sely Absolon herde every deel,
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte, 3745
And to hymself he seyde, "I shal thee quyte."

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with
chippes,

But Absolon?—that seith ful ofte, "Allas!
My soule bitake I unto Sathanas, 3750
But me were levere than al this toun," quod he,
"Of this despit awroken for to be.

3735. *er*, H *whan*, which would
have to be taken with
the next sentence.

3738. *y-herd*, haired.

3743. *corps*, E^s *corpus*.
game, om. E^s.

3750. *bitake*, commit.

Allas," quod he, "allas, I ne hadde y-bleynt."
 His hooté love was coold and al y-queynt ;
 For fro that tyme that he hadde kiste hir ers, 3755
 Of paramours he setté nat a kers ;
 For he was heeléd of his maladie.
 Full ofté paramours he gan deffie,
 And weepe as dooth a child that is y-bete.
 A softé paas he wente over the strete 3760
 Until a smyth, men clepéd daun Gerveys,
 That in his forgé smythéd plough harneys,—
 He sharpeth shaar and kultour bisily.
 This Absolon knokketh al esily,
 And seyde, "Undo, Gerveys, and that anon." 3765
 "What, who artow?" "It am I, Absolon."
 "What, Absolon ! For Cristès sweeté tree,
 Why risé ye so rathe? ey *benedicitee* !
 What eyleth yow? Som gay gerl, God it woot,
 Hath brought yow thus upon the very trot ; 3770
 By seinte Note, ye woot wel what I mene."

This Absolon ne roghté nat a bene
 Of al his pley ; no word agayn he gaf ;
 He haddé mooré tow on his distaf 3774
 Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, "Freend so deere,
 That hooté kultour in the chymenee heere,
 As lene it me, I have therwith to doone,
 And I wol brynge it thee agayn ful soone."

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3753. <i>I ne hadde y-bleynt</i> , that
I did not start aside. | 3770. <i>very trot</i> , quick trot?; E ^b
<i>viritoot</i> , Camb. <i>merytot</i> . |
| 3754. <i>y-queynt</i> , quenched. | 3771. <i>Note</i> , St. Neot. |
| 3761. <i>daun</i> , master. | 3772. <i>ne roghte nat a bene</i> ,
cared not a bean. |
| 3766. <i>It am I, E I am heere</i> . | 3777. <i>lene</i> , lend. |

Gerveys answerdé, "Certés, were it gold,
Or in a poké nobles alle untold, 3780
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewé smyth ;
Ey, Cristés foo, what wol ye do therwith?"

"Ther-of," quod Absolon, "be as be may,
I shall wel telle it thee to-morwé day,"
And caughte the kultour by the coldé stele. 3785
Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele,
And wente unto the carpenteris wal.
He cogheth first and knokketh therwithal
Upon the wyndowe, right as he dide er.

This Alison answerdé, "Who is ther, 3790
That knokketh so? I warante it a theef."

"Why nay," quod he, "God woot, my sweeté leef,
I am thyn Absolon, my deerélyng.
Of gold," quod he, "I have thee broght a ryng ;
My mooder gaf it me, so God me save ; 3795
Ful fyn it is, and therto wel y-grave ;
This wol I gevé thee, if thou me kisse."

This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thoughte he wolde amenden al the jape,
He sholdé kisse his ers, er that he scape ; 3800
And up the wyndowe dide he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth pryvély,
Over the buttoke to the haunché bon.
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon :
"Spek, sweeté bryd, I noot nat where thou art." 3805

3780. *poke*, pocket.

3781. *Thou sholdest have*, H
Ye shul hem have.

3793. *my deerelyng*, H O *my*
derlyng, Corpus³ *thi*
derelyng.

This Nicholas anon leet fle a fart,
 As greet as it had been a thonder dent,
 That with the strook he was almoost y-blent ;
 And he was redy with his iren hoot,
 And Nicholas amyddé ers he smoot. 3810

Of gooth the skyn, an handé brede aboute,
 The hooté kultour brende so his toute ;
 And for the smert he wendé for to dye.
 As he were wood for wo he gan to crye,
 " Help, water, water, help, for Goddés herte ! " 3815

This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
 And herde oon crien " water," as he were wood,
 And thoughte, " Allas, now comth Nowelis flood ! "
 He sit hym up withouten wordès mo,
 And with his ax he smoot the corde atwo, 3820
 And doun gooth al, he foond neither to selle
 Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle
 Upon the floor, and ther aswowne he lay.

Up stirte hire Alison and Nicholay,
 And criden, " Out and harrow ! " in the strete. 3825
 The neighéborès bothé smale and grete
 In ronnen for to gauren on this man,
 That yet aswowné lay, bothe pale and wan,

3808. *y-blent*, blinded.

3811. *an hande brede*, a hand's breadth.

3812. *toute*, backside.

3814. *for wo*, H *anon*.

3818. *Nowelis*, H *Noëls*; so *infra* in l. 3834.

3821. *he foond*, etc. Tyrwhitt aptly compares—

" Ainc tant come il mist à descendre
 Ne trouva point de pain à vendre.

He found no business to stop him.

3822. *celle*, cellar.

3827. *gauren*, gaze.

3828. *aswowne*, E² *aswowne he*.

For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm.
 But stonde he moste unto his owene harm, 3830
 For whan he spak he was anon bore doun
 With hendé Nicholas and Alisoun.

They tolden every man that he was wood,
 He was agast so of Nowelis flood
 Thurgh fantasie, that of his vanytee 3835
 He hadde y-boght hym knedyng tubbés thre,
 And hadde hem hangéd in the rove above ;
 And that he preyde hem, for Goddés love,
 To sitten in the roof, *par compaignye*.

The folk gan laughen at his fantasye ; 3840
 Into the roof they kiken and they gape,
 And turned al his harm unto a jape ;
 For, what-so that this carpenter answerde,
 It was for noght, no man his reson herde ;
 With othés grete he was so sworn adoun, 3845
 That he was holdé wood in al the toun,
 For every clerk anonright heeld with oother ;
 They seyde, "The man was wood, my leevé
 broother ;"

And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.
 Thus swyved was this carpenteris wyf, 3850
 For al his kepyng and his jalousye ;
 And Absolon hath kist hir nether eye,
 And Nicholas is scalded in the towte :
 This tale is doon, and God save al the rowte.

3837. *rove*, roof.3841. *kiken*, peep.3842. *turned*, H *torne*.

REEVE'S TALE

The prologue of the Reeves Tale

Whan folk hadde laughen at this nycé cas 3855
 Of Absolon and hendé Nicholas,
 Diversé folk diversely they seyde,
 But for the mooré part they loughe and pleyde ;
 Ne at this tale I saugh no man hym greve,
 But it were oonly Oséwold the Reve. 3860
 By-cause he was of carpenteris craft
 A litel ire is in his herte y-laft.
 He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite.
 "So theek," quod he, "ful wel koude I the quite,
 With bleryng of a proud millérès eye,— 3865
 If that me listé speke of ribaudye,—
 But ik am oold, me list not pley for age,
 Gras tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage ;
 This whité tope writeth myne oldé yeris ;
 Myn herte is also mowléd as myne heris, 3870
 But if I fare as dooth an openers.
 That ilké fruyt is ever lenger the wers
 Til it be roten in mullok, or in stree.

"We oldé men, I drede, so faré we,

3858. *moore*, H *moste*.

3862. *is*, om. E.

3864. *theek* or *thee ick*, thrive I.
the, E³ *yow*.

3867. *ik*, I.

not, E³ *no*.

3870. *also mowléd*, E *mowléd*

also ; *mowléd*, grown
 mouldy.

3871. *But if*, H *But yit*.
openers, medlar.

3872. *lenger*, E *leng*.

3873. *mullok*, refuse.

stree, straw.

Til we be roten kan we nat be rype. 3875
 We hoppen ay whil that the world wol pype,
 For in oure wyl ther stiketh evere a nayl,
 To have an hoor heed and a grené tayl,
 As hath a leek ; for, thogh oure myght be goon,
 Oure wyl desireth folie evere in oon ; 3880
 For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke,
 Yet in oure asshen olde is fyr y-reke.
 Foure gleeðes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
 Avauntynge, liyng, anger, coveitise.
 Thise fouré sparkles longen unto eelde. 3885
 Oure oldé lemés mowe wel been unweelde,
 But wyl ne shal nat failen, that is sooth ;
 And yet ik have alwey a coltès tooth,
 As many a yeer as it is passéd henne
 Syn that my tappe of lif bigan to renne ; 3890
 For sikerly whan I was bore anon
 Deeth drough the tappe of lyf and leet it gon,
 And ever sithe hath so the tappe y-ronne,
 Til that almoost al empty is the tonne. 3894
 The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe,
 The sely tongé may wel ryngé and chymbe
 Of wrecchednesse that passéd is ful yore ;
 With oldé folk, save dotage, is namoore."

3880. *evere in oon*, always alike.

3882. *y-reke*, spread about.

3883. *gleedes*, live coals.

3885. *longen*, belong.

3886. *mowe wel been*, H *mowen be*.

3886. *unweelde*, impotent.

3887. *faillen*, H *faile us*.

3893. *And ever sithe hath so*,
H *And now so longe*.

3895. *chymbe*, edge, brink.

3896. *chymbe*, chime.

Whan that oure Hoost hadde herd this sermonyng,
 He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng. 3900
 He seide: "What amounteth al this wit?
 What, shul we speke alday of hooly writ?
 The devel made a Revé for to preche,
 Or of a soutere shipman or a leche.
 Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme,— 3905
 Lo, Depéford, and it is half wey pryme.
 Lo, Grenéwych, ther many a shrewe is inne,
 It were al tyme thy talé to bigynne."
 "Now, sirès," quod this Oséwold the Reve,
 "I pray yow allé that ye nat yow greve, 3910
 Thogh I answére and somdeel sette his howve,
 For leveful is, with forcé force of showve;
 This dronké Millere hath y-toold us heer
 How that bigyléd was a carpenteer,
 Péraventure in scorn for I am oon, 3915
 And, by youre leve, I shal him quite anoon.
 Right in his cherlès termès wol I speke;

3904. *Or, E² And.*

soutere, cobbler. The sense is, "a cobbler may as well turn sailor or physician as a reeve take to preaching."
 "Ex sutore nauclerus," "ex sutore medicus," were proverbial expressions.

3906. *Lo, H Here is.*

Depeford, Deptford.

half wey pryme, 7.30

A.M.; H, *passed pryme*; Petworth, *almost prime*.

3910. *that ye nat yow greve, H that noon of you him greve.*

3911. *howve*, cap; for the phrase cp. line 586.

3912. *leveful*, lawful. *with force*, etc., "vim vi repellere" (note in margin of E).

of, i.e. off; H² *to*.

I pray to God his nekké moté breke.
 He kan wel in myn eyé seen a stalke,
 But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke." 3920

Heere bigynneth The Reves Tale

At Trumpyngtoun, nat fer fro Cantébrigge,
 Ther gooth a brook, and over that a brigge,
 Upon the whiché brook ther stant a melle ;
 And this is verray sooth that I yow tell.
 A millere was ther dwellynge many a day, 3925
 As eny pecok he was proud and gay.
 Pipen he koude, and fissue, and nettés beete,
 And turné coppés, and wel wrastle and sheete ;
 And by his belt he baar a long panade,
 And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade. 3930
 A joly poppere baar he in his pouche,
 Ther was no man, for peril, dorste hym touche ;

3918. *mote breke*, H³ *mot to breke*, Petworth *mot al to-breke*, Lansd. *mot he breke*.

3920. *balke*, beam.

The Reves Tale: probably taken by Chaucer from the French fabliau, *De Gombert et des Deux Clerks*, by Jean de Boves, with hints also from another fabliau now in the library at Berne, in which the clerks lodge with a thieving miller and not with a "vilein,"

as in *Gompert*. Cp. also Boccaccio, *Decameron*, D. ix. N. 6. All the local colour is of course supplied by Chaucer himself, who sets off the Cambridge clerks and their miller against the Oxford clerk and the carpenter.

3923. *whiche*, E³ *which*.

3927. *beete*, mend.

3928. *coppes*, cups.
sheete, shoot.

3929. *panade*, knife.

3931. *poppere*, dagger.

A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose.
 Round was his face, and camuse was his nose ;
 As piled as an apé was his skulle ; 3935
 He was a market-betere atté fulle ;
 Ther dorsté no wight hand upon hym legge,
 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.

A thief he was of corn and eek of mele,
 And that a sly and usaunt for to stele. 3940
 His name was hooté, deynous, Symékyn.
 A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kyn,—
 The person of the toun hir fader was,—
 With hire he gaf ful many a panne of bras
 For that Symkyn sholde in his blood allye 3945
 She was y-fostred in a nonnerye,
 For Symkyn woldé no wyf, as he sayde,
 But she were wel y-norissed and a mayde,
 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
 And she was proud and peert as is a pye. 3950
 A ful fair sighte was it upon hem two
 On haly dayes ; biforn hire wolde he go
 With his typet y-bounde about his heed ;
 And she cam after in a gyte of reed ;
 And Symkyn haddé hosen of the same. 3955

3933. *thwitel*, short knife.3934. *camuse*, flat.3935. *piled*, bald.3936. *market-betere*, a bully at fairs.3937. *legge*, lay.3938. *abegge*, aby, atone for.3941. *deynous Symekyn*, bump-tious little Simon ; E⁹
Symkyn for *Symékyn*.3948. *But*, E *But if*.3949. *of*, H *and*.3951. *it upon*, H *ther on*.3953. *y-bounde*, E³ *bounde*,
bounden ; Heng.³ *woun-*
den.3954. *gyte*, gown.

Ther dorsté no wight clepen hire but "Dame;"
 Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
 That with hire dorsté rage, or onés pleye,
 But if he wolde be slayn of Symékyn,
 With panade, or with knyf, or boidékyn ; 3960
 For jalous folk ben perilous everemo ;
 Algate they wolde hire wyvés wenden so.
 And eek for she was somdel smoterlich,
 She was as digne as water in a dich,
 As ful of hoker, and of bisémare. 3965
 Hir thoughté that a lady sholde hire spare,
 What for hire kynrede and hir nortelrie,
 That she hadde lernéd in the nonnerie.

A doghter haddé they bitwixe hem two,
 Of twenty yeer, withouten any mo, 3970
 Savynge a child that was of half yeer age ;
 In cradel it lay, and was a propré page.
 This wenché thikke and wel y-growen was,
 With kamuse nose, and eyen greye as glas ;
 Buttokés brode, and brestés rounde and hye, 3975
 But right fair was hire heer, I wol nat lye.

This person of the toun, for she was feir,

3956. *clepen hire but "Dame,"*
H clepe hir but "Ma-
dame"; cp. line 376.

3957. *that wente, H walkyng.*

3958. *ones, H elles.*

3962. *Algate, any way.*

3963. *smoterlich, smutty.*

3964. *digne, repellent.*

3965. *hoker, mockery.*
bisemare, abusiveness ;
E⁴ bismare.

3966. *a lady sholde hire spare,*
H ladyes oughten hir to
spare, i. e. be considerate
to.

3967. *nortelrie, fine manners.*

3974. Cp. line 152.

kamuse, pug-nosed.

3975. *Buttokes, H And but-*
tokes, Heng.⁴ With
buttokes.

In purpos was to maken hire his heir,
 Both of his catel and his mesuage,
 And straunge he made it of hir mariage. 3980
 His purpos was for to bistowe hire hye
 Into som worthy blood of auncetrye ;
 For hooly chirchès good moot been despended
 On hooly chirchès blood that is descended ;
 Therfore he wolde his hooly blood honoure, 3985
 Though that he hooly chirché sholde devoure.

Gret sokene hath this millere, out of doute,
 With whete and malt of al the land aboute ;
 And naméliche, ther was a greet college,
 Men clepen the Soler Halle at Cantébbregge ; 3990
 Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde.
 And on a day it happéd in a stounde,
 Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye—
 Men wenden wisly that he sholdé dye,— 3994
 For which this millere stal bothe mele and corn
 An hundred tymé moore than biforn :
 For ther biforn he stal but curteisly,
 But now he was a thief outrageously ;
 For which the wardeyn chidde and madé fare,

3980. *he*, om. H.

3985. *hooly*, H *joly*.

3987. *sokene*, tolls.

3990. *Soler Halle*, the hall with the solers, or sun-chambers, *i.e.* rooms with bay-windows, probably King's Hall, one of the predecessors of Trinity College. This reference is the sole basis of

the old assertion that Chaucer was educated at Cambridge.

3992. *in*, H² *on*.

3994. *wisly*, surely.

3996. *An hundred tyme*, H *a thousand part*.

3998. *was*, H *is*.

3999. *made fare*, took proceedings.

But ther-of sette the millere nat a tare ; 4000
 He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.

Thanne were ther yongé, pouré clerkés two,
 That dwelten in this halle of which I seye ;
 Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye ;
 And, oonly for hire myrthe and revelrye, 4005
 Upon the wardeyn bisily they crye,
 To geve hem levé, but a litel stounde,
 To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde,
 And hardily they dorsté leye hir nekke,
 The millere shold nat stele hem half a pekke 4010
 Of corn, by sleighté, ne by force hem reve.
 And at the laste the wardeyn gaf hem leve.
 John highte that oon, and Aleyn highte that oother ;
 Of o toun were they born, that highté Strother,
 Fer in the North, I kan nat tellé where. 4015

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
 And on an hors the sak he caste anon.
 Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also John,
 With good swerd and with bokeler by hir side.
 John knew the wey, that hem neded no gyde ; 4020
 And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.
 Aleyn spak first, " Al hayl, Symond, y-fayth !
 Hou fares thy fairé doghter, and thy wyf ?"
 " Aleyn, welcome," quod Symkyn, " by my lyf !
 And John also, how now ? what do ye heer ?" 4025

4002. *yongé, pouré clerkés*, so
 E³ ; Camb. *pore clerkys* ;
 H, *poure scoleres* ; Corp.³
yonge scoleres.
 4004. *Testif*, headstrong.
 4005. *revelrye*, E³ *reverye*.

4013. *highte* (2nd), E *heet*.
 4019. *with* (2nd), om. E³.
 4020. *that*, om. E⁶.
 4022. *y-fayth*, H⁶ *in faith*.
 4024. *Symkyn*, H *Symond*.

"Symond," quod John, "by God, nede has na
peer,

Hym boés serve hym-selne that has na swayn,

Or elles he is a fool, as clerkés sayn.

Oure manciple, I hope he will be deed,

Swa werkés ay the wangés in his heed ; 4030

And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,

To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn.

I pray yow spede us heythen that ye may."

"It shal be doon," quod Symkyn, "by my fay !

What wol ye doon, whil that it is in hande ?" 4035

"By God, right by the hopur wil I stande,"

Quod John, "and se how that the corn gas in.

Yet saugh I nevere, by my fader kyn,

How that the hopur waggés til and fra."

Aleyn answérdé, "John, and wiltow swa ? 4040

Thanne wil I be bynethé, by my croun !

And se how that the melé fallés doun

Into the trough,—that sal be my disport ;

For John, y-faith, I may been of youre sort,

I is as ille a millere as are ye." 4045

This millere smyléd of hir nycétee,

And thoghte, "Al this nys doon but for a wyle ;

4026. *na peer*. The two clerks speak throughout in northern dialect ; cp. *ham* (home), *swa* (so), *gas* (goes), *I is* (I am), *sal* (shall), etc.

4027. *Hym boes*, behoves him ; H. *fallés*; Camb. *muste*; rest *bihoves*, *byhoveth*.

4028. *fool*, H *fon*.

4029. *hope*, expect.

4030. *wanges*, cheek-teeth.

4031. *forthy*, therefore.

4033. *heythen*, hence; H, in *all*.

4040. *and*, om. E^b.

4044. *y-faith*, H^b in *faith*.

4046. *smyled of*, H *smyleth for*.

They wené that no man may hem bigile ;
 But by my thrift yet shal I blere hir eye,
 For al the sleighte in hir philosophye. 4050
 The mooré queynté crekés that they make,
 The mooré wol I stelé whan I take.
 In stide of flour yet wol I geve hem bren ;
 The gretteste clerkés been noght wisest men,
 As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare ; 4055
 Of al hir art ne counte I noght a tare."

Out at the dore he gooth ful pryvèly,
 Whan that he saugh his tymé softély.
 He looketh up and doun til he hath founde
 The clerkés hors, ther as it stood y-bounde 4060
 Bihynde the mille, under a levésel,
 And to the hors he goth hym faire and wel ;
 He strepeth of the brydel right anon,
 And whan the hors was laus, he gynneth gon
 Toward the fen, ther wildé marés renne,— 4065
 Forth with "Wehee!" thurgh thikké and thurgh
 thenne.

4050. *in hir*, H *and all here*.

4051. *crekes*, H *knakkes*.

4053. *flour*, H *mele*.

4055. *As whilom*, etc. "The story alluded to is told of a Mule in *Cent. Nov. Ant.*, No. 91. The Mule pretends that his name is written upon the bottom of his hind-foot. The Wolf attempting to read it, the Mule gives him a kick on the forehead and kills him.

Upon which the Fox, who was present, observes: *Ogni huomo, che sa lettera, non è savio*" (Tyrwhitt). A slightly different variant of the story occurs in *Reynard the Fox*.

4056. *ne*, om. E⁶.

4061. *levesel*, E² *lefsel*, a bower of leaves.

4064. *laus*, H *loos*.

gynneth, H *gan to*.

4066. *and*, H *and eek*.

This millere gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
 But dooth his note and with the clerkès pleyde,
 Til that hir corn was faire and weel y-grounde ;
 And whan the mele is sakkéd and y-bounde, 4070
 This John goth out, and fynt his hors away,
 And gan to crie, "Harrow !" and, "Weylaway !
 Oure hors is lorn ; Alayn, for Goddès banes
 Stepe on thy feet ; com out, man, al atanes !
 Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn !" 4075
 This Aleyn al forgat bothe mele and corn ;
 Al was out of his mynde his housbondrie.
 "What, whilk way is he geen ?" he gan to crie.

The wyf cam lepyng in ward with a ren ;
 She seyde, "Allas, youre hors goth to the fen 4080
 With wildè mares, as faste as he may go ;
 Unthank come on his hand that boond hym so,
 And he that bettré sholde han knýt the reyne !"

"Allas," quod John, "Aleyn, for Cristès peyne,
 Lay down thy swerd, and I wil myn als wa. 4085

I is ful wight, God waat, as is a raa^{roe} ;
 By Goddès herte ! he sal nat scape us bathe.
 Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe^{stable} ?
 Ilhayl, by God, Aleyn, thou is a fonne."

Thise sely clerkès han ful faste y-ronne 4090
 Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John ;

4068. *note*, business.

4074. *out*, H *on*, rest of.

4076. *forgat bothe*, H *forgeteth*.

4084. *John*, om. E.

4086. *I is*, etc., I am full
 swift, God knows, as is
 a roe.

4088. *capul*, palfrey.

lathe, stable.

4089. *Ilhayl*, ill luck to you.

fonne, fool.

4090. *Thise*, E² *this*.
han ful faste y-ronne, H
speeden hem anon.

And whan the millere saugh that they were gon,
 He half a busschel of hir flour hath take,
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
 He seyde, "I trowe the clerkès were aferd, 4095

Yet kan a millere make a clerkès berd,
 For al his art ; now lat hem goon hir weye !
Lo wher they goon ; ye, lat the children pleye ;
They gete hym nat so lightly, by my croun !"

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and down 4100
 With "Keepe ! keepe ! stand ! stand ! Jossa
 warderere !

Ga wyghtly thou, and I shal kepe hym heere."
 But shortly, til that it was verray nyght,
 They koudé nat, though they dide al hir myght,
 Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste, 4105
 Til in a dych they caughte hym atté laste.

Wery and weet, as beest is in the reyn,
Comth sely John, and with him comth Aleyn.
"Allas !" quod John, "the day that I was born !
Now are we dryve til hethyng and til scorn ; 4110
Oure corn is stoln, men wil us foolés calle,
Bathé the wardeyn and oure felawes alle,
And namély the millere, weylaway !"

Thus pleyneth John, as he gooth by the way
 Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond. 4115

4095. were, H *ben*.4096. make a clerkes berd, be-
fool him.4101. warderere, look out be-
hind.4102. wyghtly, E⁶ *whistle*.4104. dide, E³ *do*.4105. he ran alwey, H *it ran*
away.4107. beest is, H³ *bestys* (pl.).4110. hethyng, *mockery*.4112. and, H *and eek*.

The millere sittynge by the fyr he fond,—
 For it was nyght and forther myghte they noght,—
 But for the love of God they hym bisoght
 Of herberwe and of ese as for hir peny.

The millere seyde agayn, "If ther be eny, 4120
 Swich as it is, yet shal ye have youre part;
 Myn hous is streit, but ye han lernéd art,
 Ye konne by argumentés make a place
 A mylè brood of twenty foot of space.
 Lat se now if this placé may suffice, 4125
 Or make it rowm with speche, as is youre gise."

"Now, Symond," seyde John, "by Seint Cut-
 berd,
 Ay is thou myrie, and this is faire answeárd.
 I have herd seyde, 'Man sal taa of twa thynges,
 Slyk as he fyndes or taa slyk as he brynges;' 4130
 But specially I pray thee, hoosté deere,
 Get us som mete and drynke, and make us cheere,
 And we wil payen trewely atté fulle;
 With empty hand men may none haukés tulle;
 Loo, heere our silver, redy for to spende." 4135

This millere into toun his doghter sende
 For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
 And boond hire hors, it sholdé nat goon loos,

4123. *by argumentes* (E² by *arguments*), one of the many gibes at the verbal quibbles of the scholastic logicians. Cp. the story of the Sophister and the Eggs.

4127. *seyde*, H⁴ *seyde this*.

4129. *sal taa*, shall take; H, *suld take*.

4130. *slyk*, such.

4131. *hooste*, E² *hoost*, H *hoost ful*, Camb. *hoof and*.

4134. *tulle*, lure.

4138. *it sholde nat goon*, H⁶ *he schold no more go*.

And in his owene chambre hem made a bed,
 With sheetés and with chalons faire y-spred, 4140
 Noght from his owene bed ten foot or twelve.
 His doghter hadde a bed al by hir-selve,
 Right in the samé chambre by and by ;
 It mighté be no bet, and causé why ?
 Ther was no rommer herberwe in the place. 4145
 They soupen, and they speke hem to solace
 And drynken evere strong ale atté beste.
 Abouté mydnyght wenté they to reste.

Wel hath this millere vernysshéd his heed ;
 Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed. 4150
 He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose,
 As he were on the quakke or on the pose.
 To bedde he goth, and with hym goth his wyf,
 As any jay she light was and jolyf ;
 So was hir joly whistle wel y-wet ; 4155
 The cradel at hir beddés feet is set,
 To rokken, and to geve the child to sowke ;
 And whan that dronken al was in the crowke,
 To beddé went the doghter right anon ;
 To beddé wente Aleyn, and also John ; 4160
 Ther nas na moore ; hem neededé no dwale.
 This millere hath so wisely bibbéd ale
 That as an hors he snorteth in his sleepe ;
 Ne of his tayl bihynde he took no keepe ;

4140. *chalons*, coverlets [?] from
 Chalons.

4145. *rommer herberwe*, room-
 ler lodging.

4151. *yexeth*, hiccups.

4152. *on the pose*, snuffling.

4158. *crowke*, crock.

4161. *neededé*, so Corpus ; rest
neded.
dwale, sleeping draught.

His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong, 4165
 Men myghte hir rowtyng heerè two furlong ;
 The wenchè rowteth eek, *par compaignye*.

Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
 He pokèd John, and seyde, "Slepestow ?
 Herdistow evere slyk a sang er now ? 4170

Lo, whilk a compline is ymel hem alle !
 A wildè fyr upon thair bodyes falle !
 Wha herkned evere slyk a ferly thyng ?
 Ye, they sal have the flour of il endyng !
 This langé nyght ther tydés me na reste, 4175

But yet, nafors, al sal be for the beste,
 For, John," seyde he, "als evere moot I thryve,
 If that I may, yon wenchè wil I swyve.

Som esément has lawe y-shapen us ;
 For, John, ther is a lawè that says thus, 4180
 That gif a man in a point be y-greved,
 That in another he sal be releved.

Oure corn is stoln, sothly it is na nay,
 And we han had an il fit al this day ;
 And syn I sal have neen amendément 4185

Agayn my los, I wil have esément.
 By Goddes sale ! it sal neen other bee."

4166. *heere two*, H³ *heeren a*.

4170. *Herdistow*, E³ *Herdlow*.

4171. *compline*, so *Lansd.* ;
conplyng, so *Heng.* ² ;
 EH³, *cowplyng*.

ymel, among ; H⁵, *be-*
twix, *betwene*, among.

4173. *ferly*, wonderful.

4176. *nafors*, no matter.

4180. *a lawe*. Note in margin
 of H: *Qui in uno grav-*
atur in alio debet rele-
vare.

4183. *sothly*, E² *shortly*.
it, om. E.
na, E *ne*.

4184. *al*, om. H⁵.

4187. *Goddes*, E *God*.
sale, soul.

This John answerde, "Alayn, avysè thee ;
 The millere is a perilous man," he seyde,
 "And gif that he out of his sleepe abreyde, 4190
 He mightè doon us bathe a vileynye."

Aleyn answerde, "I count hym nat a flye."
 And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.
 This wenchè lay uprighte, and fastè slepte
 Til he so ny was, er she myghte espie, 4195
 That it had been to latè for to crie ;
 And, shortly for to seyn, they were aton.
 Now pley, Aleyn, for I wol speke of John.

This John lith stille a furlong wey or two,
 And to hymself he maketh routhe and wo ; 4200
 "Allas !" quod he, "this is a wikked jape ;
 Now may I seyn that I is but an ape ;
 Yet has my felawe somewhat for his harm,—
 He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
 He auntred hym, and has his nedès sped, 4205
 And I lye as a draf sak in my bed ;
 And when this jape is tald another day,
 I sal been halde a daf, a cokénay.

I wil arise and auntre it, by my fayth ;
 'Unhardy is unseely,' thus men sayth." 4210
 And up he roos and softely he wente
 Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
 And baar it softe unto the beddès feet.

4193. *hym*, H *it*.4194. *uprighte*, flat on the back.4199. *wey*, H *while*.4200. *he maketh routhe and wo*,H *compleyned of his wo*.4205. *auntred*, adventured.4206. *sak*, E *sek*.4208. *cokénay*, milksop.4210. *unseely*, unhappy.

Soone after this the wyf hir rowtyng leet,
 And gan awake and wente hire out to pisse, 4215
 And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel mysse,
 And groped heer and ther, but she foond noon.
 "Allas!" quod she, "I hadde almoost mysgoon;
 I hadde almoost goon to the clerkés bed.
 Ey, *benedicite*! thanne hadde I foule y-sped." 4220
 And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond;
 She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
 And foond the bed and thoghté noght but good,
 By causé that the cradel by it stood,
 And nysté wher she was, for it was derk, 4225
 But faire and wel she creepe into the clerk;
 And lith ful stille and wolde han caught a sleepe.
 Withinne a while this John the clerk up leepe,
 And on this goodé wyf he leith on soore;
 So myrie a fit ne hadde she nat ful yoores; 4230
 He priketh harde and soore as he were mad.
 This joly lyf han thise two clerkés lad
 Til that the thriddé cok bigan to synge.

Aleyn wax wery in the dawénynge,
 For he had swonken al the longé nyght; 4235
 And seyde, "Fare weel, Malyne, sweeté wight.
 The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
 But everemo, wher so I go or ryde,
 I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel." 4239
 "Now, deeré lemman," quod she, "go, fareweel!

4225. *And nyste, H Nat know-
yng.*

4230. *ne, om. E.*

4231. *soore, H^b deepe.*

4236. *sweete, H my sweete.*

4239. *I is, etc., I am thine
own clerk, so have I
happiness.*

But, er thow go, o thyng I wol thee telle ;
 Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
 Right at the entree of the dore bihynde,
 Thou shalt a cake of half a busschel fynde,
 That was y-maked of thyn owene mele, 4245
 Which that I heelpen my fader for to stele ;
 And, goodé lemman, God thee save and kepe !"
 And with that word almoost she gan to wepe.

Aleyn up rist and thoughte, "Er that it dawen,
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe ;" 4250
 And fond the cradel with his hand anon.
 "By God !" thoughte he, "al wrang I have
 myschon ;

Myn heed is toty of my swynk to nyght,
 That maketh me that I go nat aright ;
 I woot wel by the cradel I have myscho ; 4255
 Heere lith the millere and his wyf also."
 And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,
 Unto the bed ther as the millere lay.
 He wende have copen by his felawe John,
 And by the millere in he crepe anon, 4260
 And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he
 spak ;

He seyde, "Thou John, thou swynés-heed, awak,
 For Cristés saule, and heer a noble game ;
 For by that lord that calléd is seint Jame,
 As I have thriès in this shorté nyght 4265

4246. *my fader for*, H *myn* 4259. *copen*, crept.
owen self.

4253. *toty*, dizzy.

4264. *called*, H *cleped*.

Swyvéd the milleres doghter bolt upright,
Whil thow hast as a coward been agast."

"Ye, falsé harlot," quod the millere, "hast?
A! falsé traitour! falsé clerk!" quod he,
"Thow shalt be deed, by Goddés dignitee! 4270
Who dorsté be so boold to disparage
My doghter, that is come of swich lynage?"
And by the throté-bolle he caughte Alayn;
And he hente hym despitously agayn,
And on the nose he smoot hym with his fest. 4275
Doun ran the bloody streem upon his brest,
And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,
They walwe as doon two piggés in a poke;
And up they goon and doun agayn anon,
Til that the millere spornéd at a stoon, 4280
And doun he fil bakward upon his wyf,
That wisté no thyng of this nycé stryf,
For she was falle aslepe a lité wight
With John the clerk, that wakéd hadde al nyght;
And with the fal out of hir sleepe she breyde. 4285
"Help, hooly croys of Broméholm," she seyde,
"In manus tuas, Lord, to thee I calle!
Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle!
Myn herte is broken! help! I nam but deed! 4289

4272. *swich*, H *hik*.

4273. *throte-bolle*, windpipe.

4278. *poke*, bag.

4279. *agayn*, H *they goon*.

4280. *sporned*, H *stumbled*.

4283. *a lité wight*, a little bit.

4285. *out of hir sleepe*, H *right out of sleepe*.
breyde, started.

4286. *Broméholm*, a Norfolk priory.

4288. *is on us falle*, H *is in thi halle*.

Ther lyth oon upon my wombe and on myn heed.
 Helpe, Symkyn, for the falsé clerkés fighte !”

This John stirte up, as soone as ever he myghte,
 And graspeth by the wallés to and fro
 To fynde a staf, and she stirte up also,
 And knewe the estrés bet than dide this John, 4295
 And by the wal a staf she foond anon,
 And saugh a litel shymeryng of a light,
 For at an hole in shoon the mooné bright ;
 And by that light she saugh hem bothé two,
 But sikerly she nysté who was who ; 4300
 But as she saugh a whit thyng in hir eye,
 And whan she gan the whité thyng espye,
 She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer,
 And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer
 And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle ; 4305
 And smoot the millere on the pyléd skulle,
 And doun he gooth, and cride, “ Harrow ! I dye !”
 Thise clerkés beete hym weel and lete hym lye,
 And greythen hem and tooke hir hors anon,
 And eek hire mele, and on hir wey they gon, 4310
 And at the millé yet they tooke hir cake
 Of half a busshel flour ful wel y-bake.

Thus is the proude millere wel y-bete,

4290. *oon*, om. H².

4295. *estres*, inner parts of the house.
bet, better.

4296. *a staf she foond*, H *sche took a staf*.

4297. *shymeryng*, H *glymeryng*.

4303. *volupeer*, a cap.

4304. *ay*, H *hir*.

4306. *pyled*, bald.

4309. *greythen*, equip ; H *greyth hem wel*.

4310. *on hir wey*, H *hoom anon*.

4311. *at the mille yet*, H *at the millen dore*.

And hath y-lost the gryndynge of the whete,
 And payed for the soper everideel 4315
 Of Aleyn and of John, that bette hym weel ;
 His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als.
 Lo ! swich it is a millere to be fals ;
And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,
"Hym thar nat wené wel that yvele dooth," 4320
A gylour shal hym self bigyled be,—
 And God, that sitteth heighe in Trinitee,
Save al this compaignye, grete and smale.
 Thus have I quyte the Millere in my tale.

COOK'S TALE

The prologe of the Cokes Tale

The Cook of Londoun, whil the Réve spak,
 For joye him thoughte he clawed him on the bak ;
 "Ha, ha !" quod he, "for Cristés passioun
 This millere hadde a sharpe conclusioun
 Upon his argument of herbergage ;
 Wel seyde Salomon, in his langage, 4330
 'Ne brynge nat every man into thyn hous,'
 For herberwyng by nyghte is perilous.
 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
 Whom that he broghte into his pryvétee.

4320. *Hym thar nat*, he must
 not think to have good
 that doth ill.

4322. *Trinitee*, H⁶ *Magestee*.

4324. *my*, H *his*.

4325. *whil*, E *whil that*.

4329. *herbergage*, lodging.

I pray to God, so geve me sorwe and care, 4335
 If evere, sitthe I highte Hogge of Ware,
 Herde I a millere bettre y-set a werk.
 He hadde a jape of malice in the derk ;
 But God forbede that we stynte heere,
 And therfore if ye vouché-sauf to heere 4340
 A tale of me, that am a pouré man,
 I wol yow telle, as wel as evere I kan,
 A litel jape that fil in oure citee."

Oure Hoost answerde and seide, " I graunte it
 thee ;

Now telle on, Roger, looke that it be good ; 4345
 For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
 And many a jakke of Dovere hastow soold,
 That hath been twiës hoot and twiës coold ;
 Of many a pilgrym hastow Cristès curs,
 For of thy percely yet they fare the wors, 4350
 That they han eten with thy stubbel goos,
 For in thy shoppe is many a flyé loos.
 Now telle on, gentil Roger by thy name,
 But yet I pray thee be nat wroth for game,
 A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley." 4355
 "Thou seist ful sooth," quod Roger, "by my fey !

4335. *so geve me sorwe*, H *so*
gyf my body.

4339. *heere*, glossed *hic* in E²,
 in next line glossed
audire.

4346. *laten*, H *lete*. The line
 may mean that the cook
 stole the gravy.

4347. *a jakke of Dovere*, said

to be "a sea-fish," but
 more probably a pud-
 ding.

4350. *percely*, parsley.

4355-4358. H omits the first
 and last of these lines,
 and reads *seyth* for *sey*
 in line 4356 to make a
 rhyme.

But 'sooth pley quaad pley,' as the Flemynge seith ;
 And therefore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer
 Though that my tale be of an hostileer : 4360
 But nathêeles I wol nat telle it yit ;
 But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit ;"
 And therewithal he lough and madê cheere,
 And seyde his tale as ye shul after heere.

Heere bigynneth The Cookes Tale

A prentys whilom dwelled in oure citee, 4365
 And of a craft of vitailliers was hee.
 Gaillard he was as goldfynch in the shawe ;
 Broun as a berye, a propre short felawe,
 With lokkês blake, y-kempd ful fetisly.
 Dauncen he koude so wel and jolily, 4370
 That he was clepêd Perkyn Revelour.
 He was as ful of love and paramour
 As is the hyvê ful of hony sweete.
 Wel was the wenchê with hym myghtê meete ;
 At every bridale wolde he synge and hoppe, 4375
 He lovêd bet the taverne than the shoppe.
 For whan ther any ridyng was in Chepe,
 Out of the shoppê thider wolde he lepe ;

4357. *sooth pley quaad pley*, true
 jest, bad jest. Cp. "soth
 bourd is no bourd."

4362. *er we parte, y-wis, thou
 shalt, H or we departe
 it schal.*

4367. *Gaillard*, gay.
shawe, grove.

4369. *y-kempd ful fetisly*, full
 neatly combed.

4370. *so wel and jolily, H wel
 and prately.*

4373. *hyve ful, H hony-combe.*

4374-4376. om. H.

4377. *ridyng*, jousting or pro-
 cession.

Til that he haddé al the sighte y-seyn,
 And dauncéd wel, he wolde nat come ageyn ; 4380
 And gadered hym a meynée of his sort,
 To hoppe and synge and maken swich disport ;
 And ther they setten stevene for to meete,
 To pleyen at the dys in swich a streete ;
 For in the toun ne was ther no prentys 4385
 That fairer koudé caste a paire of dys
 Than Perkyn koude, and therto he was free
 Of his dispense, in place of pryvêtee.
 That fond his maister wel in his chaffare,
 For often tyme he foond his box ful bare ; 4390
 For sikerly a prentys revelour,
 That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,
 His maister shal it in his shoppe abyë,
 Al have he no part of the mynstralcyë ;
 For thefte and riot they been convertible, 4395
 Al konne he pleye on gyterne or ribible.
 Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degree,
 They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.
 This joly prentys with his maister bood,
 Til he were ny out of his prentishood ; 4400
 Al were he snybbéd bothe erly and late,
 And somtyme lad with revel to Newégate ;

4383. *setten stevene*, made appointment.

4385. *ne was*, E⁶ *nas*.

4389. *chaffare*, business.

4391. *sikerly a*, H *such a joly*.

4392. *riot*, H *revel*.

4393. *abye*, pay for.

4396. The meaning seems to be: "Though Riot can

play guitar or fiddle, he is still no better than a thief." H *Al can they*.

4397. *as in a lowe degree*, in common folk.

4398. *ful wrothe*, bad friends. *men*, H *ye*.

4401. *snybbéd*, rebuked.

4402. *to*, H *into*.

But attē laste his maister hym bithoghte,
 Upon a day whan he his papir soghte,
 Of a proverbe that seith this samē word, 4405
 "Wel bet is roten appul out of hoord,
 Than that it rotie al the remēnaunt."
 So fareth it by a riotous servaunt,
 It is wel lassē harm to lete hym pace
 Than he shende alle the servauntz in the place. 4410
 Therfore his maister gaf hym acquittance,
 And bad hym go with sorwe and with meschance ;
 And thus this joly prentys hadde his leve.
 Now lat him riote al the nyght or leve ;
 And for ther is no theef withoute a lowke, 4415
 That helpeth hym to wasten and to sowke,
 Of that he brybē kane or borwe may,
 Anon he sente his bed and his array
 Unto a compier of his owene sort,
 That lovēde dys, and revel and disport, 4420
 And hadde a wyf that heeld for contenance
 A shoppe, and swyvēd for hir sustenance . . .

Of this Cokes tale maked Chaucer na more

4404. *he his papir*, the apprentice his acquittance.

4410. *shende*, harm.

4415-4422. omitted in H.

4415. *lowke*, fellow-rascal.

Of this Cokes tale, etc.
 from Hengwrt MS. In
 many MSS, here follows
 the Tale of Gamelyn,

which Chaucer probably meant
 to rewrite and assign to the
 Yeoman ; but the tale, as it
 stands, is none of Chaucer's,
 and is therefore not printed
 here. The rest of the tales
 supposed to be told on the
 first day of the Pilgrimage are
 lacking, and, almost certainly,
 were never written.

TALES OF THE SECOND DAY

GROUP B

The wordes of the Hoost to the compaignye

OURE Hosté saugh wel that the brighté sonne
 The ark of his artificial day hath ronne
 The ferthé part, and half an houre and moore,
 And though he were nat depe experte in loore,
 He wiste it was the eightétethé day 5
 Of Aprill that is messager to May,
 And saugh wel that the shadwe of every tree
 Was, as in lengthe, the samé quantitee
 That was the body erect that causèd it ;
 And therfore by the shadwe he took his wit 10

1. *Hoste*, E² *hoost*.
2. *his artificial day*, i.e. between sunrise and sunset as opposed to the day of 24 hours.
3. *The ferthe part*, etc. Mr. Brae in his edition of Chaucer's treatise on the Astrolabe shows that on April 18th (April 26th of the reformed calendar) the sun would have accomplished the fourth
- part of his day's journey at 9.20 A.M., leaving 40 minutes, or "half-an-hour and more," to 10 o'clock.
4. *experte*, om. H ; *y-stert*, E².
5. *eightetethe*, five MSS. have this number in numerals, E and H both bungle, the former reading *eighte and twentithe*, the latter *threttenthe*.
7. *shadwe*, H *schade*.

That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
 Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte ;
 And for that day, as in that latitude,
 It was ten of the klokke, he gan conclude ;
 And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute. 15

"Lordynges," quod he, "I warne yow, al this
 route,

The fourthé party of this day is gon.
 Now for the love of God and of Seint John,
 Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may.
 Lordynges, the tymé wasteth nyght and day 20
 And steleth from us,—what pryvely slepyng,
 And what thurgh necligence in oure wakýnge,—
 As dooth the stream that turneth nevere agayn,
 Descendynge fro the montaigne into playn.

"Wel kan Senec, and many a philosophre, 25
 Biwailen tymé moore than gold in cofre ;
 For 'losse of catel may recovered be,
 But losse of tymé shendeth us,' quod he,
 It wol nat come agayn, withouten drede,
 Namooré than wole Malkynes maydenhede, 30
 Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse ;
 Lat us nat mowlen thus in ydelnesse.

"Sire Man of Lawe," quod he, "so have ye blis,

11. *clere*, H *fair*.

12. *Degrees*, etc., according to
 Mr. Brae the sun
 attained this altitude
 exactly at 9.58.

14. *of the klokke*, E⁴ *at the
 klokke*.

15. *plighte*, pulled.

VOL. I

19. *Leseth*, lose you.

20. *the tyme*, etc., imitated
 from the *Roman de la
 Rose*, cp. the English
 translation, ll. 369 *sqq.*

27. *catel*, chattels.

28. *shendeth*, confounds.

32. *mowlen*, moulder.

Telle us a tale anon, as forward is ;
 Ye been submytted thurgh youre free assent 35
 To stonden in this cas at my juggement.
 Acquiteth yow and holdeth youre biheeste,
 Thanne have ye doon youre devoir attè leeste."

"Hostè," quod he, "*depardieux* ich assente ;
 To breké forward is nat myn entente. 40
 Biheste is dette, and I wole holdé fayn
 Al my biheste, I kan no bettrè sayn ;
 For swich lawe as man geveth another wight
 He sholde hym-selven usen it by right ;
 Thus wole oure text, but nathélees certeyn, 45
 I kan right now no thrifty talè seyn,
But Chaucer, thogh he kan but lewedly,
On metres and on rymyng craftily,
Hath seyð hem, in swich Englissh as he kan,
Of oldé tyme, as knoweth many a man. 50
And if he have noght seyð hem, levé brother,
In o book, he hath seyð hem in another.
For he hath toold of loveris up and doun
Mo than Ovidé made of mencioun
In hise Epistellès, that been ful olde. 55
What sholde I tellen hem, syn they ben tolde?

"In youthe he made of Ceyx and Alcione,

34. *forward*, agreement.
 37. *and holdeth*, E⁶ *now of*.
 38. *doon*, E *do*.
 39. *Hoste*, E³ *Hoost*, etc.
 41. *Biheste*, promise.
 46. *no thrifty*, H *non other*,
 Pet.² *no trusty*.
 48. *craftily*, H *certeynly*.
 57. *of Ceyx and Alcione*, the

story of Ceyx and Alcyone,
 from Ovid, *Metam.* bk. xi. It
 forms the subject of ll. 62-220
 of Chaucer's *Book of the Duch-*
esse, which may have been
 originally an independent poem.
 The *Book of the Duchesse* was
 written in 1368, when Chaucer
 was nearly thirty.

And sithen hath he spoken of everichone
Thise noble wyvès and thise loveris eke.
Who so that wole his largé volume seke, 60
Clepéd the Seintés Legende of Cupide,
 Ther may he seen the largé woundés wyde
 Of Lucesse and of Babilan Tesbee ;
 The swerd of Dido for the false Enee ;
 The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon ; 65
 The pleinte of Dianire and of Hermyon ;
 Of Adriane and of Isiphilee ;
 The bareyne ylé stondynge in the see ;
 The dreynté Leandrè for his Erro ;
 The teeris of Eleyne ; and eek the wo 70
 Of Brixseyde, and of the, Ladómya !
 The crueltee of the, queene Médea !
 Thy litel children hangynge by the hals,
 For thy Jasón, that was in love so fals !
 O Ypermystra, Penolopee, Alceste, 75
 Youre wifhede he comendeth with the beste !

61. *the Seintes Legende of Cupide* (H *Legendes*), the *Legend of Good Women*, i.e. of Cupid's Saints. In the list which follows, the Man of Law omits the names of Cleopatra and Philomela, of whom Chaucer wrote, while of Delanira, Hermione, Hero, Helen, Briseis, Laodameia, Penelope and Alcestis no legends remain.
 63. *Babilan Tesbee*, Thisbe of Babylon.
 64. *swerd*, H *sorwe*.
 66. *Dianire*, E² *Diane*.
 67. *Adriane*, Ariadne.
Isiphilee, Hypsipyle.
 68. *The bareyne yle*, Naxos.
 70. *EEK*, om. E.
 71. *of*, om. E.
the, thee.
 73. *hals*, neck.
 74. *thy*, H *thilke*.
in, H *of*.

"But certainly no word ne writeth he
Of thilké wikke ensample of Canacee,
That loved hir owenē brother synfully ;
(Of swiché curséd stories I sey fy !) 80
Or ellis of Tyro Appollonius,
How that the curséd kyng Antiochus
Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,
That is so horrible a talé for to rede,
Whan he hir threw upon the pavément ; 85
 And therfore he, of ful avysément,
 Nolde nevere write in none of his sermons
 Of swiche unkynde abhomynacions,
 Ne I wol noon reherce, if that I may.
"But of my tale how shall I doon this day ? 90
Me werē looth be likned, doutelees,
To Muses that men clepe Pierides, —
Methamorphosios woot what I mene, —
 But nathélees, I recché noght a bene,
 Though I come after hym with hawebake ; 95
I speke in prose, and lat him rymēs make."
 And with that word, he with a sobré cheere
 Bigan his tale, as ye shal after heere.

77. *word ne*, H² *worde*.

78. *Canacee*. "This and the story of Apollonius of Tyre are told in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, whence it has been supposed that Chaucer intended here to blame that writer—a notion for which there appears to be no good foundation" (Wright).

80. *Of swiche*, H *On whiche*.

84. *for to*, H *as man may*.

88. *unkynde*, unnatural.

91. *be*, H *to be*.

92. *Pierides*, "the daughters of Pierus, that contended with the Muses, and were changed into Pies, Ovid, *Metam.* v." (Tyrwhitt).

95. *hawebake*, a baked haw.

MAN OF LAW'S TALE

The Prologe of the Manne of Lawes Tale

- O hateful harm ! condicion of poverte !
- With thurst, with coold, with hunger so confoundid !
- To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte ; 101
- If thou noon aske so soore artow y-woundid,
- That verry nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid !
- Maugree thyn heed thou most for indigence
- Or stele, or begge, or borwè thy despence ! 105
- Thow blamest Crist, and seist ful bitterly,
- He mysdeparteth richesse temporal ;
- Thy neighébore thou wytest synfully,
- And seist thou hast to lite and he hath al.
- “*Parfay*,” seistow, “somytyme he rekene shal, 110
- Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the gleede,
- For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir neede.”

The fifteen lines to which a small dot is prefixed are imitated from the sixteenth chapter of Pope Innocent III.'s *De Con-temptu Mundi*. The two Biblical quotations are from Eccclus. xl. 29 and Prov. xiv. 20.

101. *thee*, H *it*.

108. *Thy*, H *And thy*.
wytest, blamest.

109. *to lite*, too little.

111. *brennen in the gleede*, burn in the fire. It is needless to say that this line is Chaucer's, not the Pope's.

112. *needfulle*, H *the needfulle*.

· Herké, what is the sentence of the wise
 · “Bet is to dyen than have indigence ;”
 · Thyselvé neighébor wol thee despise, 115
 If thou be poure, farwel thy reverence !
 Yet of the wisé man take this sentence :
 · “Alle the dayes of pouré men been wikke ;”
 Be war therfore, er thou come to that prikke !

· If thou be poure thy brother hateth thee, 120
 · And alle thy freendés fleen from thee, allas !
 O riché marchauntz, ful of wele been yee,
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas !
 Youre baggés been nat fild with *ambés as*,
 But with *sys cynk*, that renneth for youre chaunce ;
 At Cristémasse wel myrie may ye daunce ! 126

Ye seken lond and see for yowre wynnynge ;
 As wisé folk ye knowen all thestaat
 Of regnès ; ye been fadrès of tidynge
 And talès, bothe of pees and of debaat. 130
 I were right now of talès desolaat,
 Nere that a marchant—goon is many a yeere—
 Me taughte a talé, which that ye shal heere.

113. *Herke*, H *Herkneth*.114. *Bel*, better.118. *the*, om. E².123. *o* (2nd), om. H⁴.124. *ambes as*, both aces.125. *sys cynk*, six and five.126. *wel*, om. E⁶.128. *ye*, Camb.⁴ *that* ; H *as*.132. *goon is*, H *goon sitthen*.133. *which that ye shal*, H
which ye shall after.

Heere begynneth The Man of Lawe his Tale

PART I

In Surrye whilom dwelte a compaignye
 • Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe,
 That wyde-where senten hir spicerye, 136
 Clothès of gold, and satyns riche of hewe.
 Hir chaffare was so thrifty and so newe
 That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare
 With hem, and eek to sellen hem hire ware. 140

Now fil it that the maistrès of that sort
 Han shapen hem to Romè for to wende,
 Were it for chapmanhode, or for disport,
 Noon oother message wolde they thider sende,
 • But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the ende ; 145

Heere begynneth, etc. The tale
which follows is taken in
the main from the Anglo-
French Chronicle of
Nicholas Trivet, an Eng-
lish Dominican who died
some time after 1334.
 The translation is no-
 where very close, and
 "of the 1029 lines of
 which the tale consists,
 about 350 are Chaucer's
 additions" (Brock). A
 line which follows Trivet
 unusually closely is here
 marked with a dot,
 while attention is called
 to the more important

of Chaucer's additions.
 Trivet's story was also
 modified by Gower in
 his *Confessio Amantis*.
 Parallels to parts of it are
 found in the tale of the
 wife of the Emperor
 Merclaus in the *Gesta*
Romanorum, and in the
Life of King Offa, by
 Matthew Paris.

134. *Surrye*, Syria.
 135. *sadde*, grave.
 136. *wyde-where*, widely.
 139. *hath deyntee*, holds it good.
 140. *hire*, H of hire.
 144. *message*, messenger.
 145. *comen*, H came.

And in swich place as thoughte hem *ávantage*
For hire entente, they take hir herbergage.

Sojourned han thise marchantz in that toun
A certein tyme, as fil to hire plesance ;
And so bifel that the excellent renoun 150
Of the Emperour's doghter, dame Custance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto thise Surryen marchantz in swich wyse
Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune voys of every man : 155
"Oure Emperour of Romé, God hym see !
A doghter hath that syn the world bigan,
To rekene as wel hir goodness as beautee,
Nas nevere swich another as is shee.
I prey to God, in honour hire susteene, 160
And wolde she were of all Europe the queene !

In hire is heigh beautee withouté pride,
Yowthé withouté grenehede or folye ;
To alle hire werkés vertu is hir gyde ;
Humblesse hath slayn in hire al tirannye ; 165
She is miróur of allé curteisye,

147. *herbergage*, lodging.

151. *Emperoures*, E² *Emperours*,
Cam.³ *Emperour*.

153. *swich*, E *swich a*.

156. *God hym see*, God regard
him.

160. *in honour hire susteene*, H
hir save and susteene.

161. *of all Europe the queene*,
E³ emphasize the wish
by the note "Europa
est tercia pars mundi !"

163. *grenehede*, greenness, im-
maturity ; H² *grefehede*,
grenehode.

Hir herte is verray chambre of hoolynesse,
 Hir hand ministre of fredam for almesse."

And al this voys was sooth, as God is trewe ;
 But now to purpos lat us turne agayn. 170
 Thise marchantz han doon fraught hir shippes
 newe,

And whan they han this blisful mayden sayn,
 Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
 And doon hir nedes as they han doon yoores,
 And lyven in wele, I kan sey yow namoore. 175

Now fil it that thise marchantz stode in grace
 Of hym that was the sowdan of Surrye,
 For whan they cam from any strangé place
 He wolde of his benigne curteisye
 Make hem good chiere and bisily espye 180
 Tidynges of sondry regnés, for to leere
 The wondres that they myghte seen or heere.

Amonges otheré thynges specially,
 • Thise marchantz han hym toold of dame Custance
 • So greet noblesse in earnest, ceriously, 185

168. *for*, H *and*.

169. *was*, H³ *is*.

173. *ful fayn*, H⁴ *agein*.

177. *sowdan*, Sultan.

181. *leere*, learn.

184. *Custance*, here and frequently H spells the name *Constance*.

185. *ceriously*, glossed *ceriose*

in E², which may be meant either for *serie* (seriously) or *seriatim* (in order); Camb. *certeynly*, Lansd. *curiously*, H *so rially*. *Seriatim* is probably the meaning, for in Trivet the merchants praise Constance for wit, wisdom, beauty, gentleness and nobility.

- That this sowdan hath caught so greet plesance
To han hir figure in his remembrance,
That all his lust, and al his bisy cure,
· Was for to love hire while his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilké largé book, 190
Which that men clipe the hevene, y-writen was
With sterrés, whan that he his birthé took,
That he for love sholde han his deeth, allas !
For in the sterrés, clerer than is glas,
Is written, God woot, whoso koude it rede, 195
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterrés many a wynter ther biforn
Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles,
Of Pompei, Julius, er they were born,
The strif of Thebés, and of Ercules, 200
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deeth ; but mennés wittés ben so dulle
That no wight kan wel rede it atté fulle.

190. *Paraventure*, this and the next five stanzas are Chaucer's own ; some of them read like later work. In ll. 197-201 he is imitating some lines from the *Megacosmus* of Bernardus Sylvestris beginning—

"Præjacet in stellis series,
quam longior ætas
Explicit et spatiis temporis
ordo suis."

Four of the imitated lines are quoted in the margin of E⁸ (see Tyr-whitt's note).

191. *men clipe*, H⁴ *is cleped*, *clepid is*, etc.

195. *koude*, H² *cowthe*.

197-9. *biforn* . . . *born*, H
byfore . . . *i-bore*.

201. *Turnus*, the opponent of Æneas.

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
 And, shortly of this matiere for to pace, 205
 He hath to hem declaréd his entente,
 And seyde hem, certain but he myghte have grace
 To han Custance withinne a litel space,
 He nas but deed, and chargéd hem in hye
 To shapen for his lyf som remedye. 210

Diversé men diversé thyngés seyden,
 They argumenten, casten up and down ;
 Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden ;
 They speken of magyk and abusioun ;
 But finally, as in conclusioun, 215
 They kan nat seen in that noon ávantage,
 Ne in noon oother wey, save mariage.

Thanne sawé they ther-inne swich difficultee,
 By wey of reson, for to speke al playn,
 By-cause that ther was swich diversitee 220
 Bitwene hir bothé lawés, that they sayn,
 They trowé that no cristene prince wolde fayn
 Wedden his child under oure lawé sweete,
 That us was taught by Mahoun, oure prophete.

And he answérdé, " Rather than I lese 225
 Custance, I wol be cristnéd, doutélees ;
 I moot been hires, I may noon oother chese.

212. *argumenten*, H⁴ *argu-
mentes, arguments.*

221. *that*, H *as.*

223. *lawe*, E⁸ *lawes*; Corp.³
add *so.*

224. *was*, E *were.*

I prey yow hoold youre argumentz in pees ;
 Saveth my lyf, and beth noght recchèlees
 To geten hire that hath my lyf in cure ; 230
 For in this wo I may nat longe endure."

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun ?
 I seye, by tretys and embassadrie,
 And by the popés mediacioun,
 And al the chirche, and al the chivalrie, 235
 That in destruccioun of maumetrie,
 And in encrees of Cristès lawé deere,
 They been acorded, so as ye shal heere :

How that the sowdan and his baronage,
 And alle hise liges, sholde y-cristnéd be, 240
 And he shal han Custance in mariage,
 And certain gold, I noot what quantitee ;
 And heer-to founden sufficient suretee.
 This same accord was sworn on eyther syde.
 Now, faire Custance, almyghty God thee gyde !

Now woldé som men waiten, as I gesse, 246
 That I sholde tellen al the purveiance
 That themperoure, of his greté noblesse,
 Hath shapen for his doghter, dame Custance.

228. *hoold*, H² *holdeth*.

230. *To geten*, H *Goth*, *geteth*.

231. *nat longe*, H *no lenger*.

232. *dilatacioun*, enlargement.

236. *maumetrie*, Mohammed-

ism, used for any form
 of idolatry.

238. *so as ye shal*, H *as ye shal
 after*.

243. *And heer-to founden suf-
 ficient*, H *And therefore
 founden they suffisant*.

Wel may men knowen that so greet ordinance 250
 May no man tellen in a litel clause,
 As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

• Bissshopes been shapen with hire for to wende,
 • Lórdés, ladies, knyghtés of renoun,
 • And oother folk ynogh, this is the ende ; 255
 And notified is thurgh-out the toun
 That every wight, with greet devocioun,
 Sholde preyen Crist, that he this mariage
 Receyve in gree and spedé this viage.

The day is comen of hir départyng— 260
 I seye, the woful day fatál is come,
 That ther may be no lenger tarynge,
 But forthward they hem dresen alle and some.
 Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
 Ful pale arist, and dreseth hire to wende, 265
 For wel she seeth ther is noon oother ende.

Allas ! what wonder is it thogh she wepte,
 • That shal be sent to strangé nacioun,
 • Fro freendés that so tendrely hire kepte,
 And to be bounde under subjeccioun 270
 Of oon she knoweth nat his condicioun ?

251. *in a litel*, H *in so litel a*,
 Camb. *in swich a lytyl*.
 254. *Lordes*, Camb. *Lordyngis*.
 259. *in gree*, in favour.
viage, voyage.

265. *arist*, arises.
 266. *seeth ther is*, H *saugh ther*
nas.
 270. *bounde*, E^s *bounden*.
 271. *knoweth*, H *knew*.

Housbondes been allé goode and han ben yoore ;
That knowen wyves, I dar say yow na moore.

“Fader,” she seyde, “thy wrecched child,
Custance,

Thy yongé doghter, fostred up so softe, 275
And ye, my mooder, my soverayn plesance,
Over allé thyng, out-taken Crist on lofte,
Custance, youre child, hire recomandeth ofte
Unto your grace ; for I shal to Surrye,
Ne shal I nevere seen yow moore with eye. 280

Allas ! unto the barbré nacioun
I mosté goon, syn that it is youre wille ;
But Crist, that starf for our savacioun,
So geve me grace hise heestés to fulfille ;
I, wrecché womman, no fors though I spille ! 285
Wommen are born to thraldom and penance
And to been under mannés governance.”

I trowe at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal
Or Ilion brende, at Thebes the citee,
Nat Romé, for the harm thurgh Hanybal, 290
That Romayns hath venquýsshéd tymés thre,

272. *Housbondes*, of course
Chaucer's own touch, as
also Constance's speech.

277. *out-taken*, except.

282. *goon*, H⁶ *anoon*.
syn that, H² *sithen*.

283. *starf*, died.
savacioun, H⁶ *redemp-*
cioun.

285. *no fors*, no matter.
spille, die.

289. *Ilion*, the citadel of Troy.
at, only in Camb. ; E om. ;
H⁴ *Or Ylion that brende* ;
Heng. *Or Ylion brent*
hadde.

290. *Nat*, ne at.

Nas herd swich tendre wepyng for pitee,
 As in the chambré was for hire partynge ;
 But forth she moot, wher so she wepe or synge.

O firste moevyng, crueel firmament, 295
 With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay,
 And hurlest al from Est til Occident,
 That naturelly wolde holde another way ;
 Thy crowdyng set the hevene in swich array
 At the bigynnyng of this fiers viage, 300
 That crueel Mars hath slayn this mariage !

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
 Of which the lord is helplees, falle, allas,
 Out of his angle into the derkeste hous.
 O Mars, O atazir, as in this cas ! 305
 O fieble Moone, unhappy been thy pass !
 Thou knytttest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
 Ther thou were weel, fro thennés artow weyved.

293. *partyng*, E⁸ *departyng*.

295. *O firste moevyng*, etc. In

E⁸ is affixed the note :

"Unde Ptholomeus libro
 1^o capitulo 8^o Primi
 motus celi duo sunt
 quorum unus est qui
 mouet totum semper ab
 Oriente in Occidentem,
 uno modo super orbes,
 etc. Ita alter vero
 motus est qui mouet
 orbem stellarum curren-
 cium contra motum pri-
 mum, videlicet ab Occi-
 dente in Orientem super

alios duos polos," etc.

The *Primum Mobile* is
 the outermost of the nine
 spheres, and revolves
 daily from east to west,
 carrying the innerspheres
 with it.

296. *sweigh*, motion, H *swough*.

304. *Out of his angle*, the
 angles were the highest
 parts of the sphere, and
 Mars had fallen from his
 angle to the lowest house
 in the sphere.

305. *atazir*, planetary influence.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, alas !
 Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun ? 310
 Is no tyme bet than oother in swich cas ?
 Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
 Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
 Noght whan a roote is of a burthe y-knowe ?
 Allas ! we been to lewèd or to slowe ! 315

To ship is brought this woful, fairè mayde,
 Solempnely, with every circumstance.
 "Now Jhesu Crist be with yow alle," she sayde.
 Ther nys namoore, but "Farewel, faire Custance !"
 She peyneth hire to make good contenance ; 320
 And forth I lete hire saille in this manère,
 And turne I wole agayn to my matère.

- The mooder of the sowdan, welle of vices,
- Espied hath hir sonès pleyn entente,
- How he wol lete hise oldè sacrifices ; 325

312. *Of viage is ther noon eleccioun.* E² here have the following quotation "from the *Liber Electionum* by one Zael" (Tyrwhitt): "Omnes concordati sunt quod elecciones sint debiles nisi in diuitibus ; habent enim isti, licet debilitentur eorum elecciones, radicem, i. [e.] natiuitates eorum, que confortat omnem planetam

debilem in itinere," etc. Only rich people could pay for the calculation of their horoscope from its "root"; but, when the horoscope was made, the choice of a time for any business became easy, because it was known which planets would be favourable to the undertaker.

316. *brought*, E *come*.

323. *welle*, H *full*.

And right anon she for hir conseil sente,
 And they been come to knowé what she mente ;
 And whan assembled was this folk in feere,
 She sette hire doun and seyde as ye shal heere.

“ Lordès,” she seyde, “ ye knowen everichon,
 How that my sone in point is for to lete 331
 The hooly lawés of oure Alkaron,
 Geven by Goddès message Makomete ;
 But oon avow to greté God I heete,
 The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte, 335
 Than Makometès lawe out of myn herte !

What sholde us tyden of this newé lawe,
 But thraldom to our bodies and penance,
 And afterward in hellé to be drawe,
 For we reneyéd Mahoun oure creance ? 340
 But, lordès, wol ye maken assurance
 As I shal seyn, assentyng to my loore,
 And I shal make us sauf for everemoore.”

• They sworn, and assenten every man
 • To lyve with hire, and dye, and by hire stonde,
 And everich, in the besté wise he kan, 346
 To strengthen hire shal alle hise frendès fonde.

328. *in feere*, together.

330. *she seyde*, H *quod sche*.
 The speeches are Chau-
 cer's.

333. *message*, messenger.

334. *heete*, promise.

336. *Than*, H⁴ *Or*.

337. *tyden*, betide.

340. *reneyed*, denied.
creance, belief.

347. *fonde*, try.

And she hath this emprise y-take on honde
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse ;
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse : 350

“ We shul first feyne us cristendom to take,—
Coold water shal nat greve us but a lite,—
And I shal swiche a feeste and revel make,
That as I trowe I shal the sowdan quite ;
For thogh his wyf be cristnéd never so white 355
She shal have nede to wasshe away the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hire lede ! ”

O sowdanesse, roote of iniquitee !
Virago thou, Semyrame the secounde,
O serpent, under femynynytee, 360
Lik to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde !
O feynéd womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence thurgh thy malice
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice !

O Sathan, envious syn thilké day 365
That thou were chacéd from oure heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the oldé way !
Thou madest Eva brynge us in servage,
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the while ! 370
Makestow of wommen whan thou wolt bigile.

354. *quite*, satisfy.

357. *font-ful*, H *font of*, Camb. ⁴
font ful of.

358. *sowdanesse*, Sultaness. The

apostrophe is Chau-
cer's.

360. *under femynynytee*, in
woman's form.

368. *Eva*, H *Eve to*.

- This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warye,
 Leet prively hire conseil goon hire way.
 What sholde I in this talé lenger tarye?
 · She rydeth to the sowdan on a day, 375
 · And seyde hym that she wolde reneye hir lay,
 · And cristendom of preestés handés fonge,
 · Repentyng hire she hethen was so longe ;
- Bisechynge hym to doon hire that honóur,
 · That she moste han the cristen folk to feeste,—
 “To plesen hem, I wol do my labóur.” 381
 The sowdan seith, “I wol doon at youre heeste ;”
 And knelynge, thanketh hire of that requeste ;
 So glad he was he nysté what to seye.
 She kiste hir sone, and hoome she gooth hir weye.

PART II

- Arryvéd been this cristen folk to londc 386
 In Surrye, with a greet solempné route ;
 And hastifliche this sowdan sente his sonde
 First to his mooder, and all the regne aboute,
 And seyde his wyf was comen, oute of doute, 390
 And preyde hire for to ryde agayn the queene,
 The honour of his regné to susteene.

372. *warye*, curse.376. *reneye hir lay*, deny her belief.377. *fonge*, take.384. *nyste*, knew not.388. *sonde*, messenger.391. *agayn*, towards.

Greet was the prees, and riché was tharray
 Of Surryens and Romainys met yfeere.
 The mooder of the sowdan, riche and gay, 395
 Recyveth hire with al so glad a cheere
 As any mooder myghte hir doghter deere,
 And to the nexté citee ther bisyde,
 A softé paas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumphe of Julius,— 400
 Of which that Lucan maketh swich a boost,—
 Was roialler ne mooré curius,
 Than was thassemblee of this blisful hoost ;
 Bút this scorpioun, this wikked goost,
 The sowdanesse, for all hire flaterynge, 405
 Caste under this ful mortally to styng.

The sowdan comth hymself soone after this
 So roially that wonder is to telle,
 And welcometh hire with allé joye and blis ;
 And thus in murthe and joye I lete hem dwelle ;
 The fruyt of this matiere is that I telle. 411
 Whan tymé cam men thoughte it for the beste,
 The revel stynte and men goon to hir reste.

• The tymé cam this oldé sowdanesse
 • Ordeynéd hath this feeste of which I tolde, 415

393. *prees*, press.

394. *yfeere*, together.

399. *A softé paas*, at a gentle
 pace.

400. *the triumphe of Julius*.

The stanza is Chaucer's
 addition.

401. *swich a*, H *moche*.

402. *ne*, E *or*.

406. *Caste*, devised.

And to the feesté cristen folk hem dresse
 In general, ye, bothé yonge and olde.
 Heere may men feeste and roialtee biholde,
 And deyntees mo than I kan yow devyse,
 But all to deere they boghte it, er they ryse. 420

O sodeyn wo ! that evere art súccessour
 To worldly blisse ! Spreynd is with bitternesse
 The ende of the joye of oure worldly labóur !
 Wo occupieth the fyn of oure gladnesse.
 Herké this conseil, for thy sikernesse, 425
 Upon thy gládé day have in thy mynde
 The unwar wo or harm that comth bihynde.

For schortly for to tellen, at o word,
 • The sowdan and the cristen everichone
 • Been al to-hewe, and stikéd at the bord, 430
 • But it were oonly dame Custance allone.
 This oldé sowdanessé, curséd krone !
 Hath with hir freendés doon this curséd dede,
 For she hir-self wolde all the contree lede.

417. H omits this line.

419. *yow*, H *of*.

421. *O sodeyn wo !* The stanza is Chaucer's addition, taken from the *De Con-temptu Mundi*, i. 23. E⁴ have in the margin : "nota de inopinato dolore: Semper mundane leticie tristitia repentina succedit. Mundana igitur felicitas multis amaritudinibus

est respersa. Extrema gaudii luctus occupat. Audi ergo salubre consilium ; in die bonorum ne immemor sis malorum."

422. *Spreynd*, sprinkled.

is, om. E³.

424. *fyn*, end.

425. *sikernesse*, security.

427. *or harm that comth*, H *that cometh ay*.

428. *schortly*, E *soothly*.

430. *al to-hewe*, hewn to pieces.

· Ne was Surryén noon, that was converted, 435
 · That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
 That he nas al to-hewe er he asterted,
 And Custance han they take anon foot-hoot
 And in a ship all steeréles, God woot,
 They han hir set and biddeth hire lerné saille 440
 Out of Surrye, agaynward to Ytaille.

· A certain tresor that she thider ladde,
 And, sooth to seyn, vitailé greet plentee,
 They han hire geven, and clothés eek she hadde,
 And forth she sailleth in the salté see ! 445
 O my Custance, ful of benignytee,
 O emperourés yongé doghter deere,
 He that is lord of fortune be thy steere !

She blesseth hire, and with ful pitous voys,
 Unto the croys of Crist thus seyde she : 450
 "O cleere, O weleful auter, hooly croys,
 Reed of the Lambés blood, ful of pitee,
 That wesshe the world fro the olde iniquitee,
 Me fro the feend and fro his clawés kepe,
 That day that I shal drenchen in the depe ! 455

437. *asterted*, escaped.

438. *foot-hoot*, in haste. Trivet makes clear that this committal of Constance to the waves was devised by that "member of the devil," the Sultanness, as a "new torment," because she refused to deny her faith.

442. *thider*, E with *hire*.

448. *steere*, steersman.

449-62. Chaucer's addition.

451. *weleful auter*, healthgiving altar ; E has *woeful* by an error.

452. *Reed*, red.

455. *drenchen*, drown.

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
 That oonly worthy werè for to bere
 The Kyng of Hevene with his woundès newe,
 The whitè Lamb that hurt was with the spere ;
 Flemere of feendès out of hym and here, 460
 On which thy lymès feithfully extenden,
 Me helpe, and gif me myght my lyf tamenden."

Yerès and dayès fleteth this creäture
 Thurghout the See of Grece unto the Strayte
 Of Marrok, as it was hire áventure. 465
 On many a sory meel now may she bayte ;
 After hir deeth ful often may she wayte,
 Er that the wildè wawès wol hire dryve
 Unto the placé ther she shal arryve.

Men myghten asken why she was nat slayn 470
 Eek at the feeste, who myghte hir body save ?
 And I answee to that demande agayn,
 Who savèd Danyel in the horrible cave,
 Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
 Was with the leoun frete, er he asterte ? 475
 No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful myracle
 In hire, for we sholde seen his myghty werkis.

459. *the spere*, H⁶ *a spere*.

460. *Flemere*, banisher.

hym and here, him and
 her, *i.e.* from both men
 and women.

466. *bayte*, feed.

469. *ther*, H *ther as*.

470-504. Chaucer's addition.

475. *frete*, eaten.

asterte, escape.

Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
 By certeine meenés ofte, as knowen clerkis, 480
 Dooth thyng for certein endé that ful derk is
 To mannés wit, that for oure ignorance
 Ne konne noght knowe his prudent purveiance.

Now sith she was nat at the feeste y-slawe,
 Who kepte hire fro the drenchyng in the see? 485
 Who kepté Jonas in the fisshés mawe,
 Til he was spouted up at Nynyvee?
 Wel may men knowe it was no wight but He
 That kepté peple Ebrayk from hir drenchyng,
 With dryé feet thurgh-out the see passyng. 490

Who bad the fouré spirites of tempest,
 That power han tanoyen lond and see,
 "Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
 Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?"
 Soothly the comandour of that was He 495
 That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte
 As wel when she awok as whan she slepte.

Where myghte this womman mete and drynké have,
 Thre yeer and moore? how lasteth hire vitaille?
 Who fedde the Egypcien Marie in the cave, 500

479. *triacle*, balm.

489. *hir*, om. Petworth².

493. See Rev. vii. 2, 3.

497. *awok*, E⁶ *wook*, throwing stress on *As*.

499. *Thre yeer and moore*, the time named by Trivet.

500. *the Egypcien Marie*. St.

Mary of Egypt, who, according to the legend, after a wanton youth lived forty-seven years in the desert as a penitent.

Or in desert? No wight but Crist, *sanz faille*.
 Fyve thousand folk it was as greet mervaille
 With lovès fyve, and fisshès two, to feede.
 God sente his foyson at hir gretè neede.

• She dryveth forth into oure occian, 505
 Thurgh-out oure wildè see, til attè laste
 Under an hoold, that nempnen I ne kan,
 Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hire caste,
 And in the sond hir ship stikéd so faste
 That thennès wolde it noght of al a tyde. 510
 The wyl of Crist was that she sholde abyde.

• The constable of the castel doun is fare
 To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte,
 And foond this wery womman, ful of care;
 He foond also the tresor that she broghte. 515
 In hir langagé mercy she bisoghte,
 The lyf out of hire body for to twynne,
 Hire to delivere of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latyn corrupt was hir speche,
 But algates ther-by was she understonde. 520
 The constable, whan hym lyst no lenger seche,
 This woful womman broghte he to the londe;

504. *foyson*, increase.

507. *Under an hoold*, etc., H
under an holte that men
nempnen can; *hoold*, a
 stronghold; *holte*, a
 wood; *nempnen*, name.

513. *this*, E *his*.

517. *twynne*, sunder.

519. *A maner Latyn*, in place
 of this "kind of corrupt
 Latin," Trivet makes her
 answer in Saxon "as
 one who was learned in
 divers languages."

She kneleth doun and thanketh Goddés sonde ;
 • But what she was she woldé no man seye
 For foul ne fair, thogh that she sholdé deye. 525

She seyde she was so mazéd in the see
 That she forgat hir myndé, by hir trouthe.
 The constable hath of hire so greet pitee,
 And eke his wyf, that they wepen for routhe.
 She was so diligent, withouten slouthe, 530
 To serve and plese everich in that place,
 That alle hir loven that looken in hir face.

• This constable and dame Hermengyld, his wyf,
 • Were payens, and that contree every-where ;
 • But Hermengyld loved hire right as hir lyf, 535
 And Custance hath so longe sojournéd there,
 In orisons with many a bitter teere,
Til Jhesu bath converted, thurgh his grace,
Dame Hermengyld, constablesse of that place.

In al that lond no cristen dorsté route, 540
 Allé cristen folk been fled fro that contree,
 Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
 The plagés of the North by land and see.
 To Walys fledde the cristyanytee
 Of oldé Britons dwellynge in this ile ; 545
 Ther was hir refut for the meené while.

523. *sonde*, sending.

529. *that they wepen*, H *they wepeden*.

534. H reads: *To telle you playne in peynes bothe were*.

534. *payens*, pagans.

535. *hire right*, H *Constance*.

536. *sojourned*, H *herberwed*.

540. *route*, come together.

543. *plages*, consts.

But yet nere cristene Britons so exiled
 That ther nere somme, that in hir privetee
 Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigiled ;
 And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three. 550
 That oon of hem was blynd and myghte nat see,
 But it were with thilke eyen of his mynde,
 With whiche men seën whan that they ben blynde.

Bright was the sonne, as in that someres day,
 · For which the constable and his wyf also, 555
 · And Custance, han y-take the righte way
 · Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
 To pleyen and to romen to and fro ;
 And in hir walk this blynde man they mette,
 Crokéd and oold, with eyen faste y-shete. 560

· “ In name of Crist,” cridè this oldè Britoun,
 “ Dame Hermengyld, gif me my sighte agayn ! ”
 This lady weex affrayéd of the soun,
 Lest that hir housbonde, shortly for to sayn,
 Wolde hire for Jhesu Cristès love han slayn ; 565
 · Til Custance made hire boold, and bad hire wirche
 The wyl of Crist as doghter of his chirche.

· The constable weex abasshéd of that sight,
 And seyde, “ What amounteth all this fare ! ”
 Custance answérde, “ Sire, it is Cristès myght 570

547. *nere*, ne were.552. *But it were with thilke*,H *but if it were with*.553. *whan that*, H *after*.556. *righte*, direct.560. *y-shete*, shut.563. *weex*, waxed.567. *his*, H *holy*.

That helpeth folk out of the feendès snare : "
 And so ferforth she gan oure lay declare,
 • That she the constable, er that it were eve,
 • Converteth, and on Crist maketh hym bileve.

This constable was no-thing lord of this place 575
 Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
 But kepte it strongly, many wyntres space,
 Under Alla, kyng of al Northhumbrelond,
 That was ful wys and worthy of his hond,
 Agayn the Scottès, as men may wel heere ; 580
 But turne I wole agayn to my mateere.

Sathan, that evere us waiteth to bigile,
 Saugh of Custance al hire perfeccioun,
 And caste anon how he myghte quite hir while,
 • And made a yong knyght, that dwelte in that toun,
 • Love hire so hoote, of foul affeccioun, 586
 That verrailly hym thoughte he sholdè spille
 But he of hire myghte onès have his wille.

• He woweth hire, but it availleth noght,
 She woldè do no synnè by no weye, 590
 • And for despit he compassed in his thoght
 To maken hire on shameful deeth to deye.

572. *lay*, belief.577. *many wyntres*, H *many a wynter*.578. *Alla*, reigned A.D. 560-588.583. *al hire*, H *the*, Camb. *al the*.584. *quite hir while*, repay her time, recompense.588. *myghte ones have*, H *ones had*.592. *on*, H³ *a*.

He wayteth whan the constable was aweye
 And pryvely upon a nyght he crepte
 In Hermengyldes chambre, whil she slepte. 595

- Wery, for-wakèd in hire orisouns,
- Slepeþ Custance, and Hermengyld also.
- This knyght, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns,
 All softely is to the bed y-go,
- And kitte the throte of Hermengyld atwo, 600
- And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance,
 And wente his wey, ther God geve hym meschance !

- Soone after cometh this constable hoom agayn
 And eek Alla, that kyng was of that lond,
 And saugh his wyf despitously y-slayn, 605
 For which ful ofte he weepe and wroong his hond,
 And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
 By dame Custance ; alas ! what myghte she seye ?
 For verray wo, hir wit was al aweye.

To kyng Alla was toold al this meschance 610
 And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wise ;
 That in a ship was founden this Custance,
 As heer biforn that ye han herd devyse.
 The kynges herte of pitee gan agryse,
 Whan he saugh so benigne a creature 615
 Falle in disese, and in mysaventure :

596. *for-waked*, over-watched.

598. *Sathanas*, E³ *Sathans*.

600. *kitte*, cut.

610-666. These eight stanzas
 are Chaucer's addition.
 In Trivet the king does

not arrive till after the
 miracle.

611. *in what wise*, H eek the
wise.

612. *this*, E *dame*.

614. *agryse*, shudder.

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
 So stant this innocent bifore the kyng.
 This falsé knyght, that hath this tresoun wrought,
 Berth hire on hond that she hath doon thys thyng ;
 But nathélees, thér was greet moornynge 621
 Among the peple, and seyn they kan nat gesse
 That she had doon so greet a wikkednesse :

For they han seyn hire evere so vertuous,
 And lovyng Hermengyld right as hir lyf. 625
 Of this baar wisse everich in that hous,
 Save he that Hermengyld slow with his knyf.
 This gentil kyng hath caught a greet motyf
 Of this wisse, and thoghte he wolde enquire
 Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 630

Allas ! Custance, thou hast no champion,
 Ne fighté kanstow noght, so weylaway !
 But he that starf for our redempcioun,
 And boond Sathan,—and yet lith ther he lay,—
 So be thy strongé champion this day ; 635
 For, but if Crist open myracle kithe,
 Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swithe.

She sit hire doun on knees and thus she sayde
 “ Immortal God that savedest Susanne

620. *Berth hire on hond*, accuses
 her falsely.

622. *seyn*, they say.

624. *seyn*, seen.

630. *lere*, teach.

636. *open*, H³ *upon thee, on thee.*

kithe, show.

637. *swithe*, quickly.

Fro falsè blame, and thou, merciful mayde, 640
 Mary I meene, doghter to Seïnt Anne,
 Bifore whos child angelès synge Osanne,
 If I be giltlees of this felonye
 My socour be, for ellis shal I dye!"

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a palè face 645
 Among a prees, of hym that hath be lad
 Toward his deeth, wher as hym gat no grace?
 And swich a colour in his face hath had,
 Men myghtè knowe his face that was bistad,
 Amongès alle the faces in that route ; 650
 So stant Custance, and looketh hire aboute.

O queenès, lyvyng in prosperitee !
 Duchesses, and ye ladyes everichone !
 Haveth som routhe on hire adversitee.
 An emperourès doghter stant allone ; 655
 She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone !
 O blood roial, that stondest in this drede,
 Fer been thy freendès at thy gretè nede !

This Alla, kyng, hath swich compassioun,
 As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee, 660
 That from hise eyen ran the water doun.

640. *false*, E³ *fals*.641. *to*, H *of*.644. *for*, E *or*.646. *prees*, crowd.647. *wher as hym gat*, H *wher*
him gayneth.649. *that was*, H *was so*.*bistad*, bestead.653. *ye*, om. E³.655. *emperoures*, E⁴ *emper-*
ours.

"Now hastily do fecche a book," quod he,
 "And if this knyght wol sweren how that she
 This womman slow, yet wol we us avyse
 Whom that we wole that shal been our justise." 665

· A Briton book written with Evaungiles
 · Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
 · She gilty was, and in the meené whiles
 · An hand hym smoot upon the nekké boon,
 · That doun he fil atonés as a stoon ; 670
 · And bothe hise eyen broste out of his face
 In sighte of every body in that place !

· A voys was herd in general audience
 · And seyde, "Thou hast desclaundred, giltyeles,
 · The doghter of hooly chirche in heigh presence ;
 · Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees !" 676
 Of this mervaille agast was al the prees ;
 As mazéd folk they stoden everichone,
 For drede of wreché, save Custance allone.

Greet was the drede, and eek the répentance,
 Of hem that hadden wronge suspecioun 681
 Upon this sely, innocent Custance ;
 And for this miracle, in conclusioun,
 And by Custances mediacioun,

662. *do fecche*, cause to be
 fetched.

665. *wole that*, H *wille*.

667. *fet*, fetched.

670. *atonés*, H *anon right*.

671. *broste*, burst.

674. *giltyeles*, E³ *giltlees*.

679. *wreche*, vengeance.

682. *sely*, simple.

- The kyng, and many another in that place, 685
 · Converted was,—thankèd be Cristès grace !

This falsè knyght was slayn for his untrouthe
 By juggèment of Alla, hastily ;
 And yet Custance hadde of his deeth greet routhe ;
 And after this Jhesus, of his mercy, 690
 Made Alla wedden, ful solempnely,
 This hooly mayden, that is so bright and sheene ;
 And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a queene.

But who was woful—if I shal nat lye—
 Of this weddyng but Donegild and na mo, 695
 The kyngès mooder, ful of tirannye ?
 Hir thoughte hir curséd herté brast atwo,—
 She woldé noght hir soné had do so.
 Hir thoughte a despit that he sholdé take
 So strange a créature unto his make. 700

Me list nat of the chaf, ne of the stree,
 Maken so long a tale as of the corn.
 What sholde I tellen of the roialtee
 At mariage, or which cours goth biforn,
 Who bloweth in the trumpe, or in an horn ? 705

692. *sheene*, beautiful.

695. *Donegild*, called Domulde
 and Domyldé in Trivet.
 That both halves of the
 story turn on the enmity
 of a mother-in-law is
 a great blot, but here

Chaucer only followed
 his authority.

695. *na mo*, H *tho*.

699. *a*, om. H.

701. *ne*, E *or*.

stree, straw.

704. *At*, H⁴ *Of*.

The fruyt of every tale is for to seye,
 They ete, and drynke, and daunce, and synge and
 pleye.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right,
 For thogh that wyvès be ful hooly thynges,
 They mostè take in paciënce at nyght 710
 Swiche manere necessities as been plesynges
 To folk that han y-wedded hem with rynges,
 And leye a lite hir hoolynesse aside,
 As for the tyme,—it may no bet bitide.

· On hire he gat a knavé childe anon, 715
 · And to a bisshop, and his constable eke,
 · He took his wyf to kepe whan he is gon
 · To Scotlondward, his foomen for to seke.
 Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
 So longe is goon with childé, til that stille 720
 She halt hire chambre, abidyng Cristès wille.

· The tyme is come a knavé child she beer,—
 · Mauricius at the fontstoon they hym calle.
 · This constable dooth forth come a messageer,
 · And wroot unto his kyng, that cleped was Alle, 725
 · How that this blisful tidyng is bifalle,
 And othere tidynges spedeful for to seye.
 He taketh the lettre and forth he gooth his weye.

713. *H and halvendel hir holy-
 nesse ley aside.
 lite, little.*

714. *no bet, no better; H non
 other.*

721. *halt, holdeth; H held.
 Cristes, H Goddes.*

723. *they, H men.*

727. *tidynges, H thynges.*

- This messenger, to doon his ávantage,
- Unto the kyngés mooder rideth swithe, 730
- And salueth hire ful faire in his langage :
- “Madame,” quod he, “ye may be glad and blithe
- And thanketh God an hundred thousand sithe,
- My lady queene hath child withouten doute,
- To joye and blisse of al this regne aboute. 735

Lo, heere the lettrés seléd of this thyng,
 That I moot bere with al the haste I may.
 If ye wol aught unto youre sone the kyng,
 I am youre servant bothé nyght and day.”
 Donegild answerde, “As now, at this tyme, nay ;
 But heere al nyght I wol-thou take thy reste. 741
 To-morwé wol I seye thee what me leste.”

- This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,
- And stolen were hise lettrés pryvèly,
- Out of his box whil he sleep as a swyn, 745
- And countrefeted was ful subtilly
- Another lettré, wrought ful synfully,
- Unto the kyng direct, of this mateere,
- Fro his constable, as ye shal after heere.
- The lettré spak, the queene delivered was 750
- Of so horrible a feendly créature,

730. *rideth*, H *he goth ful*.

731. *ful*, om. H.

733. *thanketh*, H³ *thanke*.
sithe, times.

735. *of*, E² *to*.

743. *sadly*, steadfastly, steadily.

746. *countrefeted was ful*, H
countrefet they were.

747. *Another lettre, wrought*, H
Another sche him wrote.

751. *a*, H *and*.

That in the castel noon so hardy was
That any while dorstê ther endure.

• The mooder was an elf, by aventure,
Y-comen by charmês, or by sorcerie, 755
And everich hateth hir compaignye.

• Wo was this kyng whan he this lettre had sayn,
But to no wight he tolde his sorwês soore,
• But of his owene hand he wroot agayn :
“Welcome the sonde of Crist for everemoore, 760
To me that am now lernéd in his loore !
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce :
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce.

• Kepeth this child, al be it foul or feir,
And eek my wyf unto myn hoom-comýnge ; 765
Crist whan hym list may sendé me an heir
Moore ágreáble than this to my likýnge.”
This lettre he seleth, pryvêly wepynge,
Which to the messenger was také soone,
And forth he gooth ; ther is na moore to doone. 770

O messenger, fulfild of dronkenesse !
Strong is thy breeth, thy lymês faltren ay,

753. *ther*, H *ther in*.

755. *Y-comen*, H *bycome*.

756. *everich*, H *every man*,
Camb.⁴ *every wyght*.

760. *sonde*, message, sending.

769. *was take*, H *he took ful*.

770. *is*, H² *nys*.

771-784. The next two stanzas
are Chaucer's addition

from the *De Contemptu Mundi*,
ii. 19, which is quoted by E⁴
in the note: “Quid turpius
ebrioso, cui fetor in ore, tremor
in corpore, qui premit stulta,
prodit occulta, cuius mens
alienatur, facies transformatur,
nullum enim latet secretum ubi
regnat ebrietas.”

And thou biwreyest allè secree nesse.
 Thy mynde is lorn, thou janglest as a jay ;
 Thy face is turned in a newe array ! 775
 Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
 Ther is no conseil hyd, withouten doute.

O Donégild ! I ne have noon Englissh digne
 Unto thy malice and thy tirannye,
 And therfore to the feend I thee resigne, 780
 Lat hym enditen of thy traitorie !
 Fy, mannysh, fy,—O nay, by God, I lye,—
 Fy, feendlych spirit, for I dar wel telle,
 Thogh thou heere walke, thy spirit is in helle.

• This messenger comth fro the kyng agayn, 785
 • And at the kyngès moodrès court he lighte ;
 And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
 And pleséd hym, in al that ever she myghte.
 He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte ;
 He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse 790
 All nyghté, til the sonné gan aryse.

Eft were hise lettrés stolen everychon,
 • And countrefeted lettrés in this wyse :
 • “The king comandeth his constable anon,
 Up peyne of hangyng, and on heigh juyse, 795

773. *secree nesse*, H^b *sykernes*,
sekurnesse.

775. *in*, H *al in*.

776. *route*, assembly.

789. *underpighte*, stuffed.

791. *til*, H *unto*.

795. *and on*, H *of an*.
juyse, judgment.

- That he ne sholdé suffren, in no wyse,
- Custance in-with his reawmé for tabyde
- Thre dayes and o quarter of a tyde ;

- But in the samé ship as he hire fond,
- Hire, and hir yongé sone, and al hir geere 800
- He sholdé putte, and croude hire fro the lond,
And chargen hire she never eft coome there ! ”
- O my Custance, wel may thy goost have feere,
And slepyng in thy dreem been in penance,
Whan Donégild cast al this ordinance. 805

This messenger on morwé, whan he wook,
Unto the castel halt the nexté way,
And to the constable he the lettré took ;
And whan that he this pitous lettré say,
Ful ofte he seyde, “ Allas ! and weylaway ! 810
Lord Crist,” quod he, “ how may this world endure ?
So ful of synne is many a créature !

- “ O myghty God, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful juge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocentz to spille, 815
And wikked folk regne in prosperitee ?
O goode Custance ! Allas, so wo is me,

797. *in-with*, H *in*, Pet. *with-
inne*.

reawme, realm.

798. *Thre dayes and o quarter
of a tyde*, “ deynz quatre
iours ” (Trivet); as soon

as the tide began to rise
on the fourth day.

807. *halt*, H *held*.
nexte, nearest.

809. *say*, saw.

814. *it*, H *this*.

816. *regne*, E^s *regnen*.

That I moot be thy tormentour or deye
On shamés deeth, ther is noon oother weye."

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place,
Whan that the kyng this cursed lettré sente, 821
And Custance, with a deedly palé face,
• The ferthé day toward the ship she wente ;
• But nathélees she taketh in good entente
The wyl of Crist, and knelynge on the stronde, 825
• She seyde, " Lord, ay welcome be thy sonde ;

He that me kepté fro the falsé blame,
While I was on the lond amongés yow,
He kan me kepe from harm, and eek fro shame,
In salté see, al thogh I se noght how. 830
As strong as evere he was he is yet now.
In hym triste I, and in his mooder deere,—
That is to me my seyl, and eek my steere."

Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm,
And knelynge, pitously to hym she seyde, 835
" Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee noon harm ! "
With that hir coverchief of hir heed she breyde,
And over hise litel eyen she it leyde,
And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,
And into hevene hire eyen up she caste. 840

819. *shames*, H *schamful*.830. *salle*, Camb. *the salle*,
H *the*.837. *coverchief*, H³ *kerchief*.*of*, off ; E³ *over*.

"Mooder," quod she, "and maydè, bright
Marie,

Sooth is that thurgh wommanès eggèment
Mankynde was lorn, and damndè ay to dye,
For which thy child was on a croys y-rent,—
Thy blisful eyen sawe al his torment,— 845
Thanne is ther no comparison bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thow sawe thy child y-slayn bifore thyne eyen,
And yet now lyveth my litel child, *parfay* !
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen,— 850
Thow glorie of wommanhede, thow fairè May,
Thow haven of refut, brightè sterre of day,—
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Ruest on every reweful in distresse.

"O litel child, allas ! what is thy gilt, 855
That nevere wroghtest synne as yet, *pardee* ?
Why wil thyn hardè fader han thee spilt ?
O mercy, deerè constable," quod she,
"As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee ;
And if thou darst nat saven hym for blame, 860
Yet kys hym onès in his fadrès name !"

Ther with she lookèd bakward to the londe,
And seyde, "Farewel, housbonde routhélees !"

842. *eggement*, incitement.

844. *y-rent*, H *to-rent*.

849. *litel*, om. E.

851. *May*, maiden.

852. *refut*, refuge.

854. *reweful*, H *synful*.

857. *spilt*, killed.

858. *quod*, H *seyde*.

859. *As*, H *And*.

And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde
 Toward the ship,—hir folweth al the prees,— 865
 And evere she preyeth hire child to hold his pees ;
 And taketh hir leve, and with an hooly entente,
 She blisséd hire and into ship she wente.

Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,
 Habundantly for hire ful longé space ; 870
 And othere necessities that sholdé nede
 She hadde ynogh, heryéd be Goddés grace !
 For wynd and weder, almyghty God purchase !
 And brynge hire hoom, I kan no bettré seye ;
 But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye. 875

PART III

• Alla the kyng comth hoom soone after this
 Unto his castel of the which I tolde,
 • And asketh where his wyf and his child is ?
 The constable gan aboute his herté colde
 And pleynly al the manere he hym tolde, 880
 As ye han herd,—I kan telle it no better,—
 • And sheweth the kyng his seelé and his lettre ;

And seyde, “ Lord, as ye comanded me,
 Up payne of deeth, so have I doon certain.”
 This messenger tormented was til he 885

864. *rist*, rose.865. *prees*, crowd.868. *into*, H *to the*.870. *ful longe space*, five years
according to Trivet.872. *heryed*, praised.873. *weder*, H *water*.879. *colde*, grow cold.882. *kyng his*, H *kynges*.

· Mosté biknowe, and tellen plat and pleyn,
 · Fro nyght to nyght in what place he had leyn ;
 And thus by wit and sobtil enquerynge
 Ymaged was by whom this harm gan spryng.

The hand was knowé that the lettre wroot, 890
 And all the venym of this curséd dede ;
 But in what wisé certainly I noot.
 · Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
 · His mooder slow,—that may men pleynly rede,—
 For that she traitoure was to hire ligeance. 895
 Thus endeth oldé Donegild with meschance.

The sorwe that this Alla nyght and day
 Maketh for his wyf, and for his child also,
 Ther is no tonge that it tellé may ;
 But now wol I unto Custancé go, 900
 That fleteth in the see in peyne and wo
 Fyve yeer and moore, as likéd Cristes sonde,
 Er that hir ship approched unto the londe.

Under an hethen castel atté laste,— 904
 Of which the name in my text noght I fynde,—
 Custance, and eek hir child, the see up caste.
 Almyghty God, that saved al mankynde,
 Have on Custance and on hir child som mynde,

886. *biknowe*, confess.*plat*, flat.889. *harm gan*, H *gan to*.892. *noot*, ne wot.893. *out of drede*, without
doubt.894. *slow*, slew.901. *fleteth*, floateth.902. *sonde*, sending, dispen-
sation.907. *saved*, H⁶ *saveth*.

That fallen is in hethen hand eft soon,
In point to spille, as I shal telle yow soone. 910

Doun fro the castel comth ther many a wight,
To gauren on this ship, and on Custance ;
But, shortly, from the castel on a nyght,
The lordés styward,—God geve him meschance !—
A theef, that hadde reneyed oure creance, 915
Came into the ship allone, and seyde he sholde
Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde.

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon ;
Hir childé cride, and she cride pitously ;
But blisful Marie heelp hire right anon, 920
For with hir struglyng wel and myghtily,
The theef fil over bord al sodeynly,
And in the see he dreynté for vengeance ;
And thus hath Crist unwemméd kept Custance !

O foulé lust of luxurie, lo, thyn ende ! 925
Nat only that thou feyntest mannés mynde,

910. *In point to spille*, about to die.

912. *gauren*, gaze.

914. *The lordes styward*, according to Trivet, a knight named Thelous sent to take care of Constance by the Admiral of the port. When he tempts her, she puts him off by fair words, and when his back is turned pushes him overboard.

915. *reneyed oure creance*, denied our creed.

916. *the*, om. H⁸.

917. *wher-so*, H *whether*.

919. *cride*, and *she cride*, H *crieth and sche*.

921. *struglyng*, H *strngthe*.

923. *dreynte*, drowned.

924. *unwemmed*, undefiled.

925-945. The next three stanzas are Chaucer's addition, again suggested by the *De Contemptu Mundi*, ii. 21. Against the first,

But verrailly thou wolt his body shende.
 Thende of thy werk, or of thy lustes blynde,
 Is cómpleynyng. Hou many may men fynde 929
 That noght for werk somtyme, but for thentente
 To doon this synne, been outhur slayn or shente.

How may this wayké womman han this strengthe
 Hire to defende agayn this renegat?
 O Golias, unmeasurable of lengthe,
 Hou myghté David maké thee so maat? 935
 So yong and of armure so desolaat,
 Hou dorste he looke upon thy dredful face?
 Wel may men seen it nas but Goddés grace.

Who gaf Judith coráge or hardynesse
 To sleen hym Oloferné in his tente, 940
 And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
 The peple of God? I seye for this entente,
 That right as God spirit of vigour sente
 To hem, and savéd hem out of meschance,
 So sente he myght and vigour to Custance. 945

Forth gooth hir ship thurgh out the narwé
 mouth

E⁴ have the word *Auctor*
 and the quotation: "O ex-
 trema libidinis turpitude que
 non solum mentem effeminat,
 sed etiam corpus enervat, sem-
 per sequuntur dolor et peni-
 tentia post," etc.

927. *shende*, harmi.

929. *many*, E⁸ *many oon*.

935. *maat*, feeble.

938. *seen*, H *seyn*.

Of Jubaltare and Septe, dryvyng alway,
 Som tymé West and som tyme North and South,
 And som tyme Est, ful many a wery day,
 Til Cristès mooder—blessed be she ay!— 950
 Hath shapen, thurgh hir endélees goodnesse,
 To make an ende of al hir hevynesse.

Now lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe,
 And speke we of the Romayn emperour,
 That out of Surrye hath by lettres knowe 955
 The slaughtre of cristen folk, and dishonour
 Doon to his doghter by a fals traytour,—
 I mene the curséd wikked sowdanesse,
 That at the feeste leet sleen both moore and lesse ;

For which this emperour hath sent anon 960
 His senatour with roial ordinance,
 And othere lordés, God woot many oon,
 On Surryens to taken heigh vengeance.
 They brennen, sleen, and bryng hem to mes-
 chance
 Ful many a day, but, shortly, this is thende, 965
 Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
 To Romé-ward, saillynge ful roially,

947. *Jubaltare*, Gibraltar.
Septe, on the opposite
 coast. Trivet had made
 the "hethen castel"
 (904) in Spain.

949. *day*, H *way*.
 953. *a throwe*, a while.
 961. *senatour*, H *senatours*,
 wrongly. His name was
 Arsemitus.

· And mette the ship dryvyng, as seith the storie,
 In which Custance sit ful pitously. 970
 No thyng ne knew he what she was, ne why
 · She was in swich array ; ne she nyl seye
 · Of hire estaatē, thogh she sholdē deye.

· He bryngeth hire to Rome, and to his wyf
 He gaf hire, and hir yongē sone also ; 975
 And with the senatour she ladde hir lyf.
 Thus kan oure lady bryngen out of wo
 Woful Custance and many another mo ;
 · And longē tymē dwelled she in that place,
 · In hooly werkēs evere, as was hir grace. 980

The senatourēs wyf hir auntē was,
 But for all that she knew hire never the moore.
 I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
 But to kyng Alla, which I spake of yooore,
 That wepeth for his wyf and siketh soore, 985
 I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
 Under the senatourēs governance.

· Kyng Alla, which that hadde his mooder slayn,
 Upon a day fil in swich répentance,
 That, if I shortly tellen shal and playn, 990

970. *sit*, H *sitteth*.

971. *ne*, om. E.

973. *thogh*, H *althogh*.

981. *senatoures*, E⁴ *senatours*,
 so in 987.

hir auntē was, really her

cousin. According to
 Trivet, Arsemius married
 Helen, daughter of
 Sallustius, Constance's
 uncle.

982. *she*, i.e. Helen.

985. *siketh*, sigheth.

- To Rome he comth to receyven his penance,
- And putte hym in the popes ordinance,
In heigh and logh ; and Jhesu Crist bisoghte
Forgeve his wikked werkés that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurghout the toun is born, 995
How Alla, kyng, shal comen on pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten hym biforn ;
· For which the senatour, as was usage,
· Rood hym agayns, and many of his lynage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence, 1000
As to doon any kyng a reverence.

Greet cheeré dooth this noble senatour
To kyng Alla, and he to hym also ;
Everich of hem dooth oother greet honour ;
And so bifel that in a day or two 1005
This senatour is to kyng Alla go
To feste, and, shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custancés sone wente in his compaignye.

Som men wolde seyn at réqueste of Custance
This senatour hath lad this child to feeste,— 1010
I may nat tellen every circumstance ;
Be as be may, ther was he at the leeste ;

995. *the toun*, H⁶ *Rome toun*.
997. *herbergeours*, harbingers.
999. *hym agayns*, to meet him.
1000. *heighe*, om. H².
1005. *in*, E *in-with* ; H² *on* ;
Camb. *within*.

1009. *Som men wolde seyn*, i.e.
Trivet.
1010. *this child*, with the usual
medieval prodigality of
time Trivet makes Mau-
rice now seventeen.

But sooth is this, that at his moodrès heeste
 Biforn Alla, durynge the metès space,
 The child stood, lookynge in the kyngès face. 1015

This Alla kyng hath of this child greet wonder,
 And to the senatour he seyde anon,
 "Whos is that fairè child, that stondeth yonder?"
 "I noot," quod he, "by God and by Seint John!
 A mooder he hath, but fader hath he noon, 1020
 That I of woot;" but shortly, in a stounde
 He tolde Alla how that this child was founde;

"But God woot," quod this senatour also,
 "So vertuous a lyvere in my lyf
 Ne saugh I nevere as she, ne herde of mo, 1025
 Of worldly wommen, maydè ne of wyf;
 I dar wel seyn hir haddè levere a knyf
 Thurgh out hir brest, than ben a womman wikke;
 There is no man koude brynge hire to that prikke."

Now was this child as lyke unto Custance 1030
 As possible is a créature to be.
 This Alla hath the face in remembrance
 Of dame Custance, and theron mused he,
 If that the childès mooder were aught she
 That is his wyf, and pryvely he sighte, 1035
 And spedde hym fro the table that he myghte.

1013. *sooth it is, that at, H*
sooth it is right at.
 1014. *Biforn Alla, H Biforn*
hem alle.
 1016. *this child, H⁴ the child.*

1021. *a stounde, a while.*
 1025. *as she, ne herde of mo, H*
suck as sche no mo.
 1027. *hir, H⁴ sche.*
 1035. *sighte, sighed; H hight.*

" *Parfay* !" thoghte he, " fantome is in myn heed !
 I oghte deme of skilful juggement,
 That in the salté see my wyf is deed ;"
 And afterward he made his argument, 1040
 " What woot I, if that Crist have hyder y-sent
 My wyf by see, as wel as he hire sente
 To my contree fro thennés that she wente ? "

And after noon, hoom with the senatour
 Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce. 1045
 This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,
 And hastify he sente after Custaunce ;
 But trusteth weel hire listé nat to daunce,
 Whan that she wisté wherfore was that sonde ;
 Unnethe upon hir feet she myghté stonde. 1050

Whan Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hire grette,
 And weep, that it was routhé for to see ;
 For at the firsté look he on hire sette,
 He knew wel verrailly that it was she,
 And she for sorwe as dounb stant as a tree ; 1055
 So was hir herté shet in hir distresse
 When she remembred his unkyndénesse.

Twyés she swowned in his owene sighte.
 He weep, and hym excuseth pitously :

1037. *fantome*, fantasy. The stanza is Chaucer's addition.

1038. *skilful*, H *rightful*.

1040. *his*, H *this*.

1045. *wonder*, wondrous.

1049. *sonde*, sending.

1050. *Unnethe upon*, H³ *Unnethes on*. *Unnethe*, hardly.

1051-1078. Chaucer's addition.

"Now God," quod he, "and alle hise halwés
bryghte, 1060

So wisly on my soul as have mercy,
That of youre harm as gyltélees am I,
As is Maurice my sone, so lyk your face ;
Ellés the feend me fecche out of this place !"

Long was the sobbyng and the bitter peyne, 1065
Er that hir woful hertés myghté cesse ;
Greet was the pitee for to heere hem pleyne,
Thurgh whiché pleintés gan hir wo encesse.
I pray yow all my labour to relesse,
I may nat tell hir wo until to-morwe, 1070
I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But finally, whan that the sothe is wist,
That Alla gyltélees was of hir wo,
I trowe an hundred tymés been they kist ;
And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two, 1075
That, save the joye that lasteth everemo,
Ther is noon lyk that any créature
Hath seyn, or shal, whil that the world may dure.

Tho preydé she hir housbonde, mekely,
In rélief of hir longé pitous pyne, 1080
That he wolde preye hir fader specially,

1060. *alle*, om. E⁶.

1061. *wisly*, surely.

1062. *gyltelees*, E² *giltlees*, so
in l. 1073.

1070. *hir wo until to-morwe*,

H *al here sorwe unto
morwe*.

1071. *sorwe*, H *the sorwe*,
Lansd.³ *hir sorwe*.

1078. *seyn*, seen.

That of his magestee he wolde enclyne
 To vouché-sauf som day with hym to dyne.
 She preyde hym eek he woldé, by no weye,
 Unto hir fader no word of hire seye. 1085

Som men wold seyn how that the child Maurice
 Dooth this message unto the emperour,
 But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
 To hym, that was of so sovereyn honour
 As he that is of cristen folk the flour, 1090
 Sente any child ; but it is bet to deeme .
 He wente hymself, and so it may well seeme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
 To come to dyner, as he hym bisoughte,
 And wel rede I, he looked bisily 1095
 Upon this child, and on his doghter thoghte.
 Alla goth to his in, and as him oghte,
 Arrayed for this feste in every wise,
 As ferforth as his konnyng may suffice.

The morwé cam, and Alla gan hym dresse, 1100
 And eek his wyf, this emperour to meete ;
 And forth they ryde in joye and in gladnesse ;
 And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
 She lighté doun and falleth hym to feete ;

1084. *preyde*, H *preyeth*.
wolde, H⁶ *schulde*.

1086. *Som men*, i.e. Trivet.

1088. *nyce*, foolish.

1090. *cristen*, H *Cristes*.

1091. *bet*, better ; H *best*.

1096. *Upon this child*, appar-
 ently Alla took Maurice
 with him.

1099. *konnyng*, ability.

1100. *dresse*, make ready.

1104. *doun*, H⁴ *adoun*.

"Fader," quod she, "youre yongé child, Custance,
Is now ful clene out of youre rémembrance. 1106

I am youre doghter Custancé," quod she,
"That whilom ye han sent unto Surrye.
It am I, fader, that in the salté see
Was put allone, and dampnéd for to dye. 1110
Now, goodé fader, mercy, I yow crye!
Sende me namoore unto noon hethénese,
But thonketh my lord heere of his kyndenesse."

• Who kan the pitous joyé tellen al
• Bitwixe hem thre, syn they been thus y-mette? 1115
But of my talé make an ende I shal,—
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.
This gladé folk to dyner they hem sette.
In joye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle,
A thousand foold wel moore than I kan telle. 1120

• This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope and lyvéd cristenly.
To Cristés chirché he dide greet honour;
But I lete all his storie passen by;
Of Custance is my talé specially. 1125
In the oldé Romane Geestés may men fynde
Mauricés lyf, I bere it noght in mynde.

1110. *dampned*, condemned.

1117. *The day goth faste*, apparently the reflection of the Man of Law.

1122. *Maad by the pope*, Trivet says by his grandfather

"par l'assent del pape Pelagie e de tout le senat de Rome."

1126. *the olde Romane Geestes*, i.e. the *Gesta Romanorum*; H om. *the*.

This kyng Alla, whan he his tymé say,
 With his Custance, his hooly wyf so sweete,
 To Engelond been they come the righté way, 1130
 Wher as they lyve in joye and in quiete ;
 But litel while it lasteth, I yow heete.
 Joye of this world for tyme wol nat abyde,
 Fro day to nyght it changeth as the tyde.

Who lyved evere in swich delit o day 1135
 That hym ne moevéd outhur conscience,
 Or ire, or talent, or som kynnes affray,
 Envye, or pride, or passion, or offence ?
 I ne seye but for this endé this sentence,
 That litel while in joye, or in plesance, 1140
 Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance ;

For Deeth, that taketh of heigh and logh his rente,
 Whan passed was a yeer, evene as I gesse,
 Out of this world this kyng Alla he hente,
 For whom Custance hath ful greet hevynesse. 1145

1130. *been*, om. H².

1132. Here E⁴ have the marginal note : "A mane usque ad vesperam mutabitur tempus ; tenent tympanum et gaudent ad sonum organi," etc.

1135. Marginal note in E⁴ from *De Contemptu Mundi*, i. 22 : "Quis unquam unicam diem totam duxit in sua dileccione [delectatione] jocundam quem in ali-

qua parte diei reatus consciencie, uel impetus ire, uel motus concupiscencie non turbauerit, quem liuor inuidie uel ardor auaricie uel tumor superbie non vexauerit, quem aliqua jactura uel offensa, uel passio non commouerit," etc.

1137. *talent*, desire.

kynnes, H *maner*.

1143. *evene*, om. H.

1144. *this world*, H *world*.

Now lat us prayen God his soule blesse !
 And dame Custancé, finally to seye,
 Toward the toun of Romé goth hir weye.

To Rome is come this hooly creature,
 And fyndeth hire freendés hoole and sounde. 1150
 Now is she scapéd al hire aventure,
 And whan that she hir fader hath y-founde,
 Doun on hir kneës falleth she to grounde ;
 Wepynge for tendrenesse in herté blithe,
 She heryeth God an hundred thousand sithe. 1155

In vertu and in hooly almus dede
 They lyven alle, and nevere asonder wende.
 Til deeth departed hem this lyf they lede,
 And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende.
 Now Jhesu Crist, that of his myght may sende 1160
 Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
 And kepe us allé that been in this place. *Amen.*

1146. *prayen*, E *praye to*, H
praye that.

1149. *hooly*, H *nobil.*

1150. Trivet makes the cause
 of her return the illness
 of her father, who dies

in her arms the thir-
 teenth day after her
 coming.

1155. *heryeth*, praises.

1156. *in*, om. E^g.

1158. *departed*, separated.

Words of the Host, the Parson, and the Shipman

Oure Hoste upon his stiropes stode anon,
 And seydé, "Good men, herkeneth, everichon!
 This was a thrifty talé for the nones!" 1165
 Sir Parish Prest," quod he, "for Goddés bones,
 Tell us a tale, as was thy forward yore;
 I se wel that ye lernéd men in lore
 Can moché good, by Goddés dignitee!"

The Persone him answérde, "*Benedicite*!" 1170
 What eyleth the man so sinfully to swere?"

Our Hoste answérde, "O Jankyn, be ye there?
 I smelle a Loller in the wind," quod he.
 "Nowe, good men," quod our Hosté, "herkneth me,
 Abydeth, for Goddés digné passioun," 1175
 For we shul han a predicacioun;
 This Loller here wol prechen us somwhat."

"Nay, by my fader soule! that shal he nat!"

1163-1190. The text is taken from MS. Arch. Seld. B. 14, the only MS. which preserves the reading *Shipman* in line 1179.

1165. *a thrifty tale*, this phrase is taken as an allusion to B. 46, thereby proving that the reference is to the Man of Law's Tale.

1173. *a Loller*, a Lollard. These lines were almost certainly written some years after Wyclif's

death, and there is no reason to believe that Chaucer sympathized with his latest doctrinal development. Any priest who lived a strict life just then might incur the charge of Lollardy, and this explains the passage.

1174. *Nowe*, from H; rest *Howe*.

1176. *predicacioun*, sermon.

1178. *my fader*, Arch. Seld. *godis*.

Seydè the Shipman ; " here shal he nat preche ;
 He shal no gospel glosen here, ne teche. 1180
 We leven alle in the grete God," quod he,
 " He woldè sowen som difficulte,
 Or sprengen cokkel in our clenè corn ;
 And therfore, Hoste, I warnè the biforn,
 My joly body shal a talé telle, 1185
 And I shal clynken yow so mery a belle
 That I shal wakyn al this companye ;
 But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
 Ne of phisyk, ne termès queint of lawe ;
 There is but litel Latin in my mawe." 1190

SHIPMAN'S TALE

Heere bigynneth The Shipmannes Tale

A marchant whilom dwelled at Seint Denys,
 That richè was, for which men helde hym wys ;
 A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,
 And compaignable and revelous was she,
 Which is a thyng that causeth more dispence 1195
 Than worth is al the chiere and reverence

1179. *Shipman*, Heng.⁵ *Squier*,
 H *Sompnour*.

1180. *glosen*, expound ; H
preche.

1181. *leven*, believe.

1182. *sowen*, H *schewen*.

1183. *sprengen*, scatter.
cokkel, an allusion to

the derivation of Lollard
 from *lolium*.

1186-1190. om. H.

The Shipmannes Tale: in
 Heng.⁶ here follows
 the Squire's Tale. No
 original of the Ship-
 man's Tale has yet
 been found.

1194. *revelous*, H⁵ *reverent*.

That men hem doon at festés and at daunces.
 Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
 Passen as dooth a shadwe upon the wal ;
 But wo is hym that payen moot for al ! 1200
 "The sely housbonde algate he moste paye ;
 He moot us clothe and he moot us arraye,
 Al for his owene worship richely,
 In which array we dauncé jolily.
 And if that he noght may, par aventure, 1205
 Or ellis list no swich dispence endure,
 But thynketh it is wasted and y-lost,
 Thanne moot another payen for oure cost,
 Or lene us gold, and that is perilous."

This noblé marchaunt heeld a worthy hous, 1210
 For which he hadde alday so greet repair
 For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,
 That wonder is ; but herkneth to my tale.

Amongés alle hise gestés, grete and smale,
 Ther was a monk, a fair man and a boold,— 1215
 I trowe of thritty wynter he was oold,—
 That evere in oon was comynge to that place.
 This yongé monk, that was so fair of face,
 Aqueynted was so with the goodé man
 Sith that hir firsté knoweliché bigan, 1220
 That in his hous as famulier was he
 As it is pössible any freend to be.

1199. *upon*, H³ *on*.

1202. *and he moot us*, H *in*
ful good.

1206. *list no*, H *will not*.

1210. *worthy*, H⁵ *noble*.

1217. *evere in oon*, always alike.
comynge, H⁶ *drawyng*.

1222. *is*, om. E ; H reads as
it possible is a friend to
be.

And for as muchel as this goodè man
 And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,
 Were bothè two y-born in o village, 1225
 The monk hym claymeth as for cosynage ;
 And he agayn he seith nat onés nay,
 But was as glad therof as fowel of day ;
 For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.
 Thus been they knyht with eterne alliaunce, 1230
 And ech of hem gan oother for tassure
 Of bretherhede whil that hir lyf may dure.

Free was Daun John, and namely of dispence,
 As in that hous, and ful of diligence
 To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage : 1235
 He noght forgat to geve the leesté page
 In al the hous, but after hir degree
 He gaf the lord and sitthe al his meynee,
 Whan that he cam, som manere honest thyng,
 For which they were as glad of his comyng 1240
 As fowel is fayn whan that the sonne upriseth ;
 Na moore of this as now, for it suffiseth.

But so bifel this marchant on a day
 Shoop hym to maké redy his array
 Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare, 1245
 To byen there a porcioun of ware ;
 For which he hath to Parys sent anon
 A messenger, and preyed hath Daun John
 That he sholde come to Seint Denys, to pleye

1226. *cosynage*, kinship.1235. *costage*, expense.1231. *ech*, H⁴ *ilke*.1233. *namely*, especially ; H²1238. *sitthe*, afterwards.*manly*.1244. *Shoop*, determined.

With hym and with his wyf a day or tweye, 1250
 Er he to Brugges wente, in allé wise.

This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
 Hath of his abbot, as hym list, licence,—
 By cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
 And eek an officer,—out for to ryde, 1255
 To seen hir graunges and hire bernés wyde,
 And unto Seint Denys he comth anon.
 Who was so welcome as my lord Daun John,
 Oure deeré cosyn, ful of curteisye?
 With hym broghte he a jubbe of malvesye 1260
 And eek another, ful of fyn vernage,
 And volatyl, as ay was his usage,
 And thus I lete hem ete and drynke and pleye,
 This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.

The thriddé day this marchant up ariseth, 1265
 And on his nedés sadly hym avyseth,
 And up into his countour-hous gooth he,
 To rekene with hymself, as wel may be,
 Of thilké yeer, how that it with hym stood,
 And how that he despended hadde his good, 1270
 And if that he encresséd were or noon.
 Hise bookés and hise baggès, many oon,
 He leith biforn hym on his countyng-bord.
 Ful riché was his tresor and his hord, 1274
 For which ful faste his countour dore he shette,

1256. *graunges*, farms.
bernes, barns.

1260. *jubbe*, a jug.

1261. *fyn*, H *wyn*, Corp.² *good*.
vernage, a white wine.

1262. *volatyl*, H *volantyn*.

1263. *ete and*, om. E.

1265. *ariseth*, H² *he riseth*.

1266. *sadly*, seriously.

1268. *as*, om. E.

And eek he nolde that no man sholde hym lette
Of hise accountés, for the meené tyme ;
And thus he sit til it was passéd pryme.

Daun John was rysen in the morwe also
And in the gardyn walketh to and fro 1280
And hath hise thyngés seyð ful curteisly.

This goodé wyf cam walkynge pryvèly
Into the gardyn, there he walketh softe,
And hym saleweth, as she hath doon ofte.
A maydé child cam in hire compaignye, 1285
Which as hir list she may governe and gye,
For yet under the yerdé was the mayde.
"O deeré cosyn myn, Daun John," she sayde,
"What eyleth yow, so rathé for to ryse ?"

"Necé," quod he, "it oghte ynough suffise 1290
Fyve houres for to slepe upon a nyght,
But it were for an old appalléd wight,
As been thise wedded men that lye and dare,
As, in a fourmè, sit a wery hare
Were al forstraught with houndès grete and smale ;
But, deeré necé, why be ye so pale ? 1296
I trowé certés that oure goodé man
Hath yow laboured sith the nyght bigan,
That yow were nede to resten hastily ;"
And with that word he lough ful murily 1300
And of his owene thought he wax al reed.

1278. *pryme*, about 9 A.M.

1281. *thynges*, i.e. his prayers.

1286. *gye*, guide.

1287. *under the yerde*, under the rod.

1292. *appalled*, withered.

1293. *dare*, daze.

1294. *sit*, sitteth ; H *lith*.

1295. *forstraught*, exhausted.

1301. *reed*, red.

This fairé wyf gan for to shake hir heed,
 And seyde thus : " Ye, God woot al," quod she,
 " Nay, cosyn myn, it stant nat so with me,
 For by that God that gaf me soule and lyf, 1305
 In al the reawme of France is ther no wyf
 That lassé lust hath to that sory pleye ;
 For I may synge alas and weylawey
 That I was born ; but to no wight," quod she,
 " Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me ; 1310
 Wherefore I thynke out of this lande to wende,
 Or ellés of myself to make an ende,
 So ful am I of drede and eek of care."

This monk bigan upon this wyf to stare,
 And seyde, " Allas, my necé, God forbede 1315
 That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,
 Fordo youreself ; but tel me of youre grief ;
 Paraventure I may in youre meschief
 Conseille or helpe ; and therfore telleth me
 All youre anoy, for it shal been secree ; 1320
 For on my porthors here I make an ooth
 That nevere in my lyf, for lief ne looth,
 Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye."

" The same agayn to yow," quod she, " I seye,
 By God and by this porthors I yow swere, 1325
 Though men me wolde al into pieces tere,
 Ne shal I nevere, for to goon to helle,
 Biwreye a word of thyng that ye me telle,

1302. *gan for*, H *bygan*.1304. *Nay*, E *Nay*, *nay*.1307. *lasse lust*, less inclination.1317. *tel*, H⁶ *telleth*.1318. *may*, E *yow may*.1321. *porthors*, breviary.*here*, only in Camb.1325. *I yow*, H *wil I*.

Nat for no cosynage ne alliance,
 But verraily for love and affiance." 1330
 Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon they kiste,
 And ech of hem tolde oother what hem liste.

"Cosyn," quod she, "if that I hadde a space,
 As I have noon, and namely in this place,
 Thanne wolde I telle a legende of my lyf, 1335
 What I have suffred sith I was a wyf
 With myn housbonde, al be he of youre kyn."

"Nay," quod this monk, "by God, and Seint
 Martyn !

He is na mooré cosyn unto me
 Than is this lief that hangeth on the tree. 1340
 I clepe hym so, by Seint Denys of Fraunce !
 To have the mooré cause of áqueyntaunce
 Of yow, which I have lovéd specially,
 Aboven allé wommen, sikerly.

This swere I yow on my professioun. 1345
 Telleth youre grief, lest that he come adoun,
 And hasteth yow, and gooth youre wey anon."

"My deeré love," quod she, "O my Daun John,
 Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
 But out it moot, I may namoore abyde ! 1350
 Myn housbonde is to me the worsté man
 That evere was sith that the world bigan,
 But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
 To tellen no wight of oure privetee,

1331. *they kiste, H⁴ i-kiste, kist.*

1337. *al be he of youre kyn, H
 though he be your cosyn.*

1338. *and, E³ and by.*

1344. *sikerly, surely.*

1353. *sit, it fits.*

Neither a-bedde ne in noon oother place— 1355
 God shilde I sholde it tellen for his grace !
 A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
 But al honóur, as I kan understonde,
 Save unto yow, thus muche I tellen shal ;
 As helpe me God, he is noght worth at al 1360
 In no degree the value of a flye ;
 But yet me greveth moost his nygardyë.
 And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly
 Desiren thyngès sixe, as wel as I :
 They woldè that hir housbondes sholdè be 1365
 Hardy and wise, and riche, and therto free,
 And buxom unto his wyf, and fressh abedde ;
 But by that ilke Lord that for us bledde,
 For his honour myself for to arraye,
 A Sondag next, I mostè nedès paye 1370
 An hundred frankes, or ellis I am lorn ;
 Yet were me levere that I were unborn
 Than me were doon a sclaunder or vileynye ;
 And if myn housbonde eek it myghte espye
 I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye, 1375
 Lene me this somme, or ellis moot I deye.
 Daun John, I seye, lene me thise hundred frankes ;
 Pardee, I wol nat faillè yow my thanks,
 If that yow list to doon that I yow praye,
 For at a certeyn day I wol yow paye, 1380

1356. *God shilde*, God forbid.1367. *unto*, H⁴ *to*.1368. H reads: *But by that lord that for us alle bledde*.1369. *myself for*, H *myselfen*.1370. H reads: *A sonday next comyng yit moste I praye*.

1376-1379. H om.

1378. *my thanks*, willingly.

And doon to yow what plesance and service
 That I may doon, right as yow list devise,
 And but I do, God take on me vengeance
 As foul as evere hadde Genyloun of France !”

This gentil monk answerde in this manere : 1385

“Now trewely, myn owene lady deere,
 I have,” quod he, “on yow so greet a routhe,
 That I yow swere, and plighté yow my trouthe,
 That whan youre housbonde is to Flaundrés fare
 I wol delyvere yow out of this care ; 1390
 For I wol bryngé yow an hundred frankes ;”
 And with that word he caughte hire by the flanks
 And hire embraceth harde and kiste hire ofte.
 “Gooth now youre wey,” quod he, “all stille and
 softe,

And lat us dyne as soone as that ye may, 1395
 For by my chilyndre it is pryme of day.
 Gooth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.”

“Now ellès God forbedè, sire,” quod she ;
 And forth she gooth as jolif as a pye,
 And bad the cookés that they sholde hem hye, 1400
 So that men myghté dyne and that anon.
 Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,
 And knokketh at his countour boldely.

“Qy la ?” quod he. “Peter ! it am I,”
 Quod she ; “what, sire, how longé wol ye faste ?

1384. *Genyloun*, the betrayer
 of Roland.

1387. H reads : *I have on yow
 so greet pitè and routhe.*

1392. *flankes*, H⁴ *schankes*.

1396. *chilyndre*, a pocket sun-
 dial.

1404. *Qy la*, E³ *who ther*, E
 with *qi la* in margin.

How longé tymé wol ye rekene and caste 1406
 Youre sommés, and youre bookès, and youre
 thynges?

The devel have part on alle swiche rekenynges !
 Ye have ynough, pardee, of Goddés sonde ;
 Com doun to-day, and lat youre baggès stonde.
 Ne be ye nat ashaméd that Daun John 1411
 Shal fasting al this day alengé goon ?
 What ! lat us heere a messe, and go we dyne !"

"Wyf," quod this man, "litel kanstow devyne
 The curious bisynessé that we have ; 1415
 For of us chapmen,—al so God me save,
 And by that lord that clepid is Seint Yve,—
 Scarsly amongès twelvè two shuln thryve,
 Continuelly lastynge unto oure age.
 We may wel makè chiere and good visage, 1420
 And dryvé forth the world as it may be,
 And kepen oure estaat in pryvètee
 Til we be deed ; or ellès that we pleye
 A pilgrymage, or goon out of the weye ;
 And therfore have I greet necessitee 1425
 Upon this queynté world tavyse me,
 For, everemooré we moote stonde in drede
 Of hap and fortune in oure chapmanhede.

"To Flaundrés wol I go to-morwe at day,
 And come agayn as soone as evere I may ; 1430

1408. *on*, H² *of*.1409. *sonde*, sending.1412. *alenge*, wretched.1413. *What*, om. E.1417. *Seint Yve*, Saint Ivo.1418. *two*, E³ *ten*, Corp.³ *tweye*.1423, 24. *we pleye A pilgrym-*
age, as a pretext for
 keeping out of the way
 of creditors.1426. *tavyse*, to advise.

For which, my deeré wyf, I thee biseke
 As be to every wight buxom and meke,
 And for to kepe oure good be curious,
 And honestly governé wel oure hous.
 Thou hast ynough in every maner wise, 1435
 That to a thrifty houshold may suffise ;
 Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
 Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille."
 And with that word his countour dore he shette,
 And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette ; 1440
 But hastily a messé was ther seyde,
 And spedily the tables were y-leyde,
 And to the dyner fasté they hem spedde,
 And richély this monk the chapman fedde.
 At after dyner Daun John sobrély 1445
 This chapman took apart and prively
 He seyde hym thus : " Cosyn, it standeth so
 That, wel I se, to Bruggés wol ye go.
 God and Seint Austyn spedé yow and gyde !
 I prey yow, cosyn, wisely that ye ryde ; 1450
 Governeth yow also of youre diete
 Atemprély, and namely in this hete.
 Bitwix us two nedeth no strangé fare ;
 Fare wel, cosyn, God shildé yow fro care !
 And if that any thyng, by day or nyght, 1455
 If it lye in my power and my myght,
 That ye me wol comande in any wyse,
 It shal be doon right as ye wol devyse.

1438. *shaltow*, H⁴ *thou mayst*.1444. *fedde*, cp. ll. 1260-1262.1445. *At*, H⁴ *And*.1455. *And if that*, H *If ther be*.

"O thyng, er that ye goon, if it may be :
 I woldé prey yow for to lené me 1460
 An hundred frankés for a wyke or tweye,
 For certein beestés that I mosté beye,
 To stooré with a placé that is oures,—
 God helpe me so, I wolde it weré youre !
 I shal nat faillé surely of my day, 1465
 Nat for a thousand frankes a milé way !
 But lat this thyng be secree, I yow preye,
 For yet to-nyght thise beestés moot I beye ;
 And fare now wel, myn owene cosyn deere,
Graunt mercy of youre cost and of youre cheere !"

This noble marchant gentilly anon 1471
 Answerde and seyde, "O cosyn myn, Daun John,
 Now sikerly this is a smal requeste,
 My gold is yourés whan that it yow leste,
 And nat oonly my gold, but my chaffare ; 1475
 Take what yow list, God shildé that ye spare !

"But o thyng is, ye knowe it wel ynogh,
 Of chapmen, that hir moneie is hir plogh ;
 We may creauncé whil we have a name,
 But goldlees for to be, it is no game ; 1480
 Paye it agayn whan it lith in youre ese ;
 After my myght ful fayn wolde I yow plese."

Thise hundred frankes he fette hym forth anon
 And privély he took hem to Daun John ;

1460. *lene*, lend.1461. *wyke*, week.1465. *of*, E *at*.1466. *a mile way*, by a long
way,[not] by any means.1475. *chaffare*, merchandise.1477. *o*, one.1479. *creaunce*, get credit.1483. *fette*, fetched.
hym, om. H⁶.

No wight in all this world wiste of this loone, 1485
 Savynge this marchant and Daun John allone.
 They drynke, and speke, and rome a while and
 pleye,

Til that Daun John rideth to his abbeye.

The morwè cam and forth this marchant rideth
 To Flaundres-ward,—his prentyswel hym gydeth,—
 Til he cam in to Brugges murily. 1491

Now gooth this marchant, faste and bisily
 Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaunceth ;
 He neither pleyeth at the dees, ne daunceth,
 But as a marchant, shortly for to telle, 1495
 He lad his lyf, and there I lete hym dwelle.

The Sondag next this marchant was agon,
 To Seint Denys y-comen is Daun John,
 With crowne and berde all fressh and newe y-shave.
 In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave, 1500
 Ne no wight ellès, that he nas ful fayn
 For that my lord Daun John was come agayn ;
 And shortly, to the point right for to gon,
 This fairé wyf accorded with Daun John
 That for thise hundred frankes he sholde a nyght
 Háve hire in hise armés bolt upright : 1506
 And this acord parfournéd was in dede.
 In myrthe al nyght a bisy lyf they lede
 Til it was day, that Daun John wente his way,

1494. *the*, om. E².

1496. *lad*, E⁵ *let*, *lat*, etc.

1502. *For*, om. E³.

1503. *to the point right*, E *right*
to the point, H *to the*
poynie, Pet.² *to her*
poynie.

And bad the meynee, Fare wel, have good day ;
 For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun, 1511
 Hath of Daun John right no suspeciou ;
 And forth he rydeth boom to his abbeye,
 Or where hym list ; namoore of hym I seye.

This marchant, whan that ended was the faire,
 To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire, 1516
 And with his wyf he maketh feeste and cheere,
 And telleth hire that chaffare is so deere
 That nedés moste he make a chevyssaunce,
 For he was bounden in a reconyssaunce, 1520
 To payé twenty thousand sheeld anon ;
 For which this marchant is to Parys gon,
 To borwe of certeine freendés that he hadde
 A certeyn frankes, and somme with him he ladde.
 And whan that he was come into the toun, 1525
 For greet chiertee, and greet affectioun,
 Unto Daun John he gooth hym first to pleye,—
 Nat for to axe or borwe of hym moneye,—
 But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
 And for to tellen hym of his chaffare, 1530
 As freendés doon whan they been met yfeere.
 Daun John hym maketh feeste and murye cheere,
 And he hym tolde agayn, ful specially,
 How he hadde wel y-boght and graciously,—

1519. *chevyssaunce*, borrowing.1521. *sheeld*, crown.1524. *ladde*, took.1526. *chiertee*, dearneess.1528. H reads : *Nought for to
borwe of hym no kyn**monay*, so Corp.³ omit-
ting *kyn*.1529. *wite*, know.1531. *yfeere*, together.1534. *wel y-boght*, H⁴ *bought
right [ful] wel*.

Thankéd be God !—al hool his marchandise, 1535
 Save that he moste, in allé maner wise,
 Maken a chevyssaunce as for his beste,
 And thanne he sholdé been in joye and reste.

Daun John answérdé, "Certés I am fayn,
 That ye in heele ar comen hom agayn, 1540
 And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
 Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat mysse,
 For ye so kyndely this oother day
 Lenté me gold, and as I kan and may
 I thanké yow, by God and by Seint Jame ! 1545
 But nathélees I took unto oure dame,
 Youre wyf, at hom, the samé gold ageyn
 Upon youre bench, she woot it wel certeyn,
 By certeyn tokenes that I kan yow telle.
 Now by youre leve I may no lenger dwelle ; 1550
 Oure abbot wole out of this toun anon,
 And in his compaignyè moot I goon.
 Grete wel oure dame, myn owene necé sweete,
 And fare wel, deeré cosyn, til we meete !"

This marchant, which that was ful war and wys,
 Creancéd hath and payd eek in Parys 1556
 To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
 The somme of gold, and hadde of hem his bond ;
 And hoom he gooth, murie as a papejay,
 For wel he knew he stood in swich array 1560

1540. *heelee*, health.1556. *Creancéd*, raised on credit.1549. *yow*, H⁴ *hir*.1557. *Lumbardes*, Lombard money-dealers.1555. *ful*, H *both*.1559. *papejay*, poppyngay.

That nedès moste he wynne in that viage
A thousand frankes aboven al his costage.

His wyf ful redy mette hym attè gate,
As she was wont of oold usage algate,
And al that nyght in myrthè they bisette, 1565
For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.
Whan it was day this marchant gan embrace
His wyf al newe, and kiste hire on hir face,
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.

"Namoore," quod she, "by God, ye have
ynough!" 1570

And wantownely agayn with hym she pleyde ;
Til attè lastè thus this marchant seyde :
"By God," quod he, "I am a litel wrooth
With yow, my wyf, although it were me looth ;
And woot ye why? By God, as that I gesse 1575
That ye han maad a manere straungènesse
Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun John,—
Ye sholde han warnèd me, er I had gon,
That he yow hadde an hundred frankès payed,
By redy tokene,—and heeld hym yvele apayed
For that I to hym spak of chevyssaunce— 1581
Me seméd so as by his contenaunce—
But nathélees, by God, oure hevene kyng,
I thoughtè nat to axen hym no thyng.
I prey thee, wyf, as do namoorè so ; 1585
Telle me alwey, er that I fro thee go,

1561. *viage*, journey.

1565. *bisette*, busied themselves.

1571. *agayn with hym she*, H
with him sche lay, etc.

1572. *thus*, om. E⁴; Corp.²
that.

1580. *yvele apayed*, ill - con-
tented.

If any dettour hath in myn absence
 Y-payéd thee, lest thurgh thy negligence
 I myghte hym axe a thing that he hath payed."

This wyf was nat aferéd nor affrayed, 1590

But boldély she seyde, and that anon,
 "Marie, I deffie the falsé monk, Daun John !
 I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel !

He took me certeyn gold, that woot I weel.
 What, yvel thedam on his monkés snowte ! 1595

For, God it woot, I wende withouten doute
 That he hadde geve it me bycause of yow,
 To doon therwith myn honour and my prow,
 For cosynage, and eek for beelé cheere,
 That he hath had ful ofté tymés heere. 1600

But sith I se I stonde in this disjoynt,
 I wol answére yow shortly to the poynt.
 Ye han mo slakkere dettours than am I,
 For I wol paye yow wel and redily
 Fro day to day, and if so be I faille, 1605

I am youre wyf, score it upon my taille,
 And I shal paye as soone as ever I may ;
 For by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
 And nat on wast, bistowéd every deel ;
 And for I have bistowéd it so weel 1610

For youre honóur, for Goddés sake, I seye,
 As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.
 Ye shal my joly body have to wedde ;

1593. *kepe*, reck.

1595. *yvel thedam*, ill-luck.

1598. *prow*, profit.

1599. *beele cheere*, good cheer.

1601. *disjoynt*, dilemma.

1609. *wast*, waste.

every deel, every bit.

1613. *to wedde*, as pledge.

By God ! I wol nat paye yow but abedde.
 Forgyve it me, myn owene spousé deere, 1615
 Turne hiderward, and maketh bettré cheere ! ”

This marchant saugh ther was no remedie,
 And for to chide it nere but greet folie,
 Sith that the thyng may nat amended be.
 “ Now, wyf,” he seyde, “ and I forgeve it thee, 1620
 But by thy lyf ne be namoore so large ;
 Keepe bet oure good, this geve I thee in charge.”
 Thus endeth now my tale, and God us sende
 Taillynge ynough unto oure lyves ende. *Amen.*

*Bihoold the murie wordes of the Hoost to the
 Shipman, and to the lady Prioress*

“ Wel seyde ! by *corpus dominus*,” quod our Hoost ;
 “ Now longé moote thou saillé by the cost, 1626
 Sire gentil maister, gentil maryneer !
 God geve this monk a thousand last quade yeer !
 A ha, felawes, beth ware of swiche a jape !
 The monk putte in the mannés hood an ape, 1630
 And in his wyvès eek, by Seint Austyn !
 Draweth no monkés moore unto youre in.

“ But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,

1617. *ther was no*, H *noon*
oother.

1618. *nere but greet*, H⁶ *om.*
greet, H *nas for nere.*

1621. *large*, extravagant.

1622. *oure*, H⁶ *my*, Heng. *thy.*
this, E *that.*

1623. *now*, om. EH³.

1625. *dominus*, H *boones.*

1628. *last quade yeer*, loads of
bad years.

1629. *jape*, trick.

1632. *in*, inn.

Who shal now tellé first of al this route
 Another tale ;" and with that word he sayde, 1635
 As curteisly as it had ben a mayde,
 " My lady Prioressé, by youre leve,
 So that I wiste I sholdé yow nat greve,
 I woldé demen that ye tellen sholde
 A talé next, if so were that ye wolde. 1640
 Now wol ye vouchésauf, my lady deere ?"
 " Gladly," quod she, and seyde as ye shal heere.

PRIORESS'S TALE

The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale

" O Lord, oure Lord, thy name how merveillous
 Is in this largé world y-sprad," quod she ;
 " For noght oonly thy laudé precious 1645
 Parfournéd is by men of dignitee,
 But by the mouth of children thy bountee
 Parfournéd is ; for on the brest soukyng
 Somtymé shewen they thyn heriyng.

Wherefore, in laude as I best kan or may, 1650
 Of thee, and of the whité lylle flour,
 Which that the bar and is a mayde alway,
 To telle a storie I wol do my labóur ;

1643. *O Lord, oure Lord*, etc.
 the beginning of Ps. viii.
 1646. *Parfournéd*, consum-
 mated.

1647. *the mouth*, H *mouthes*.
 1649. *heriyng*, praising.
 1651. *while*, om. E.
 1652. *the bar*, bare thee.

Nat that I may encreessen hir honóur,
 For she hirself is honóur and the roote 1655
 Of bountee, next hir sone, and soulés boote.

O mooder mayde ! O maydé mooder fre !
 O bussh unbrent, brennynge in Moyses sighte !
 That ravysedest doun fro the Deitee,
 Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in tha-
 lighte ; 1660
 Of whos vertu, whan He thyn herté lighte,
 Conceyvéd was the Fadrés sapience,
 Helpe me to telle it in thy reverence !

Lady, thy bountee, thy magnificence,
 Thy vertu, and thy grete humylitee, 1665
 Ther may no tonge expresse in no sciéce ;
 For somtyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
 Thou goost biforn of thy benygnytee,
 And getest us the lyght thurgh thy preyère,
 To gyden us unto thy Sone so deere. 1670

My konnyng is so wayk, O blisful queene,
 For to declare thy greté worthynesse,

1656. *boote*, help.

1660. *goost*, spirit.

in thalighte, in thee
 alighted.

1667-1669. Imitated from
 Dante, *Paradiso* xxxiii.
 16-18, a passage from
 which, or from some
 Latin original, Chaucer
 had already borrowed

in the proem to the
 "Tale of St. Cecilia,"
 assigned in the *Canter-*
bury Tales to the second
 Nun.

1669. *the lyght thurgh thy*, so
 H³ ; *E thurgh light of*,
 Heng. *the light of*,
 Corp.² *to light thurgh*.

1671. *wayk*, weak.

That I ne may the weighté nat susteene ;
 But as a child of twelf monthe oold or lesse,
 That kan unnethés any word expresse, 1675
 Right so fare I, and therfore I yow preye,
 Gydeþ my song that I shal of yow seye."

Heere bigynneth The Prioresses Tale

Ther was in Asye, in a greet citee,
 Amongés cristene folk, a Jewerye,
 Sustened by a lord of that contree, 1680
 For foule usure and lucre of vileynye
 Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye ;
 And thurgh the strete men myghté ride or wende,
 For it was free, and open at eyther ende.

A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood 1685
 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were

1673. *ne may the weighte nat,*
H may not this in my
wyt.

1675. *unnethes* (E⁴ *unnethe*),
 hardly.

1677. *Gydeþ, H Endith.*

The Prioresses Tale: a poem very similar in subject and incident to this, of a Paris beggar-boy murdered by a Jew for singing the anthem "Alma Redemptoris Mater," is among the minor poems of the Vernon MS. and has been printed by the Chaucer and Early

English Text Societies. In a French analogue, also printed by the Chaucer Society, the boy sings a "Gaude, Maria." This tale is, of its kind, as perfect as anything Chaucer ever wrote, and was certainly composed especially for the Prioress, to whose character it is exactly suited.

1679. *a Jewerye, a Jews'*
quarter.

1681. *lucre of vileynye*, glossed
 "turpe lucrum," E²;
H felonye.

Children an heepe, y-comen of Cristen blood,
 That lernéd in that scolé yeer by yere
 Swich manere doctrine as men uséd there,—
 This is to seyn, to syngen, and to rede, 1690
 As smalé children doon in hire childhede.

Among thise children was a wydwe's sone,
 A litel clergeoun, seven yeer of age,
 That day by day to scolé was his wone ;
 And eek also, where as he saugh thymage 1695
 Of Cristés mooder, he hadde in usage,
 As hym was taught, to knele adoun and seye
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this wydwe hir litel sone y-taught
 Oure blisful lady, Cristés mooder deere, 1700
 To worshiþe ay, and he forgate it naught,
 For sely child wol alday sooné leere,—
 But ay whan I remembre on this mateere,
 Seint Nicholas stant evere in my presence,
 For he so yong to Crist dide reverence. 1705

This litel child his litel book lernýnge,
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
 He *Alma redemptoris* herdé synge,

1693. *clergeoun*, chorister.
seven yeer, H *that seve*
yer was.

1694. *wone*, wont.

1699. *sone*, H⁵ *child*.

1702. *sely*, good: the line
 quotes an old proverb.

1704. *Seint Nicholas*, who

fasted on Wednesdays
 and Fridays while at his
 mother's breast.

1708. *Alma redemptoris*
 [*mater*], two hymns to
 the B. Virgin, beginning
 in this way, are still ex-
 tant.

As children lernéd hire anthiphoner ;
 And, as he dorste, he drough hym ner and ner,
 And herkned ay the wordés and the noote, 1711
 Til he the firsté vers koude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latyn was to seye,
 For he so yong and tendre was of age ;
 But on a day his felawe gan he preye 1715
 Texpounden hym this song in his langage,
 Or telle him why this song was in usage ;
 This preyde he hym to construe and declare
 Ful often time upon hise knowés bare.

His felawe, which that elder was than he, 1720
 Answerde hym thus : " This song I have herd seye
 Was makéd of oure blisful lady free,
 Hire to salue, and eek hire for to preye
 To been oure help and socour whan we deye ;
 I kan na moore expounde in this mateere, 1725
 I lerné song, I kan but smal grammeere."

" And is this song makéd in reverence
 Of Cristés mooder ? " seyde this innocent.
 " Now certés, I wol do my diligence
 To konne it al er Cristémasse is went, 1730
 Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,

1709. *anthiphoner*, book of anthems.

1710. *drough hym ner and ner*, drew nearer and nearer.

1711. *noote*, note, music.

1712. *koude*, knew.

1716. *this*, H³ *the*.

1717. *why*, H *what*.

1719. *knowes*, knees.

1723. *salue*, salute.

1731. *shent*, scolded.

And shal be beten thriës in an houre,
I wol it konne oure lady for to honoure !”

His felawe taughte hym homward prively
Fro day to day, til he koude it by rote, 1735
And thanne he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acordynge with the note.
Twies a day it passéd thurgh his throte,
To scoléward and homward whan he wente ;
On Cristès mooder set was his entente. 1740

As I have seyde, thurgh-out the Jewerie
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful murily than wolde he synge and crie
O Alma redemptoris evere-mo.
The swetnesse hath his herté percéd so 1745
Of Cristès mooder, that to hire to preye
He kan nat stynte of syngyng by the weye.

Oure firsté foo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewés herte his waspés nest,
Up swal, and seide, “O Hebrayk peple, allas ! 1750
Is this to yow a thyng that is honést
That swich a boy shal walken as hym lest
In youre despit, and synge of swich sentence,
Which is agayn youre lawés reverence ?”

1738. *a day*, H *on the day*,
Camb.⁴ *on a day*.

1743. *than*, om. E².

1745. *hath*, om. E².

1749. *Jewes*, spelt *Iues* in E.

1750. *Up swal*, swelled up.

1753. *of swich sentence*, to such
effect.

1754. *yourre*, E⁴ *oure*.

Fro thennés forth the Jewés han conspired 1755
 This innocent out of this world to chace.
 An homycidé ther-to han they hyred,
 That in an aleye hadde a privee place ;
 And as the child gan forby for to pace,
 This curséd Jew hym hente and heeld hym faste,
 And kitte his throte, and in a pit hym caste. 1761

I seye that in a wardrobe they hym threwe
 Where as thise Jewés purgen hire entraille.

O curséd folk, O Herodés al newe !
 What may youre yvel ententé yow availle ? 1765
 Mordre wol out, certéyn, it wol nat faïlle,
 And namely ther thonóur of God shal sprede.
 The blood out-crieth on youre curséd dede.

O martir, sowded to virginitee !
 Now maystow syngen, folwyng evere in oon 1770
 The whité Lamb celestial, quod she,
 Of which the grete Evaungelist, Seint John,
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
 Biforn this Lamb, and synge a song al newe,
 That nevere fleshly wommen they ne knewe. 1775

1759. *forby for to pace*, to pass by the spot.

1760. *hente*, seized.

1761. *in a pit hym caste*, H threwe him in atte laste.

1762. *wardrobe*, privy.

1764. O, E^s of.

1769. *sowded*, attached.

1771. *quod she*, this is, I believe, the only instance in the *Canterbury Tales*

in which Chaucer reminds us that we are reading the narrative of a narrative. The words also show that the Tale was either written or revised after the idea of the *Canterbury Tales* had been conceived.

1775. *fleshly*, an adverb, glossed *carnaliter* in E².

This pouré wydwe awaiteth al that nyght
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght,
 For which, as soone as it was dayés lyght,
 With facé pale of drede and bisy thoght,
 She hath at scole and ellés-where hym soght ; 1780
 Til finally she gan so fer espie
 That he last seyn was in the Jewerie.

With moodrés pitee in hir brest enclosed
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir mynde,
 To every placé where she hath supposed 1785
 By liklihedde hir litel child to fynde ;
 And evere on Cristés mooder, meeke and kynde,
 She cride, and atté lasté thus she wroghte,
 Among the curséd Jewés she hym soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously, 1790
 To every Jew that dwelte in thilké place,
 To telle hire if hir child wente oght forby.
 They seydé "Nay ;" but Jhesu, of his grace,
 Gaf in hir thoght inwith a litel space,
 That in that place after hir sone she cryde, 1795
 Where he was casten in a pit bisyde.

1777. *hir, H⁴ this.
 cam, H cometh.*

1779. *of, H in, Corp.³ for.*

1781. *so fer, H of hem.*

1782. *last seyn was, H was
 last seyn, Corp.³ was
 seyn last.*

1786. *hir litel child to fynde,*

*H³ hir child for to
 fynde.*

1790. *frayneth, asks.*

1791. *dwelte in thilke, H
 dwelled in that.*

1792. *wente oght forby, went
 at all by there ; H went
 ther by, Corp.³ went
 hem by.*

O gretè God that parfournest thy laude
 By mouth of innocentz, lo, heere thy myght !
 This gemme of chastité, this emeraude,
 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright, 1800
 Ther he, with throte y-korven, lay upright,
 He *Alma redemptoris* gan to synge,
 So loude, that all the placé gan to ryngé !

The cristene folk, that thurgh the stretè wente,
 In coomen, for to wondre upon this thyng ; 1805
 And hastily they for the provost sente.
 He cam anon, withouten taryng,
 And herieth Crist that is of hevene kyng,
 And eek his mooder, honour of markynde,
 And after that the Jewès leet he bynde. 1810

This child, with pitous lamentacioun,
 Up taken was, syngynge his song alway ;
 And with honóur of greet processiou
 They carien hym unto the nexte abbay.
 His mooder swownynge by his beeré lay ; 1815
 Unnethé myghte the peplé that was theere
 This newé Rachel bryngé fro his beere.

With torment, and with shameful deeth echon,
 This provost dooth the Jewès for to sterve,

1797. *parfournest*, accomplish-
 est.

1801. *y-korven*, cut.
upright, flat on his back.

1805. *wondre upon*, Corp.³
wondren on.

1808. *herieth*, praises.

1810. *leet*, caused.

1815. *his*, H⁸ *the*.

1816. *Unnethé*, scarcely.

1819. *dooth for to sterve*, causes
 to die.

That of this mordré wiste, and that anon ; 1820
 He noldé no swich cursednesse observe,—
 “Yvele shal have that yvele wol deserve,”—
 Therfore with wildé hors he dide hem drawe,
 And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Upon his beere ay lith this innocent 1825
 Biform the chief auter, whil massé laste,
 And after that the abbot with his covent
 Han sped hem for to burien hym ful faste ;
 And when they hooly water on hym caste,
 Yet spak this child whan spreynd was hooly water
 And song, *O Alma redemptoris mater !* 1831

This abbot, which that was an hooly man,
 As monkés been, or ellés oghte be,
 This yongé child to conjure he bigan,
 And seyde, “O deeré child, I halsé thee, 1835
 In vertu of the hooly Trinitee,
 Tel me what is thy causé for to synge,
 Sith that thy throte is kut to my semynge?”

“My throte is kut unto my nekké boon,”
 Seydé this child, “and as by wey of kynde 1840
 I sholde have dyed, ye, longé tyme agon ;
 But Jhesu Crist, as ye in bookés fynde,

1821. *observe*, countenance.1827. *covent*, convent, monks.1830. *spreynd*, sprinkled.*hooly*, H the, Corp.^s the
holy.1835. *halse*, conjure.1838. *to my semynge*, H⁴ at my
semynge.1840. *kynde*, nature.1841. *ye*, yea.

Wil that his glorie laste and be in mynde,
 And, for the worship of his mooder deere,
 Yet may I synge *O Alma* loude and cleere. 1845

“This welles of mercy, Cristès mooder sweete,
 I loved alwey, as after my konnyng,
 And whan that I my lyf sholdè forlete,
 To me she cam, and bad me for to synge
 This antheme verrailly in my deyyng, 1850
 As ye han herd, and whan that I hadde songe
 Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge:

Wherfore I synge, and syngé moot certeyn
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,
 Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn; 1855
 And after that thus seyde she to me,
 ‘My litel child, now wol I fecché thee
 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
 Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.’” 1859

This hooly monk, this abbot, hym meene I,
 His tonge out caughte and took away the greyn,
 And he gaf up the goost ful softely.
 And whan this abbot hadde this wonder seyn,
 Hise saltè teeris trikked down as reyn,
 And gruf he fil, al plat upon the grounde, 1865
 And stille he lay as he had ben y-bounde.

1848. *forlete*, resign.1850. *antheme*, spelt *Anthephen*
in E.1853. *syngè*, E *synge* I.1855. *of-taken*, H om. *of*,
Camb. *i-takyn*.1856. *after that*, E *afterward*.1865. *gruf*, on his face.1866. *ben*, E³ *leyn*.

The covent eek lay on the pavement,
 Wepyng and heryng Cristés mooder deere,
 And after that they ryse and forth been went,
 And tooken away this martir from his beere ; 1870
 And in a tombe of marbul stonés cleere,
 Enclosen they his litel body sweete :
 Ther he is now, God leve us for to meete !

O yongé Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also
 With curséd Jewes, as it is notáble, 1875
 For it is but a litel while ago,
 Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable,
 That of his mercy God, so merciáble,
 On us his greté mercy multiplie
 For reverence of his mooder, Marie. *Amen.* 1880

Bihoold the murye wordes of the Hoost to Chaucer

Whan seyð was al this miracle, every man
 As sobre was that wonder was to se,
 Til that oure Hoosté japen tho bigan,
 And thanne at erst he lookéd upon me, 1884
 And seyðe thus : " What man artow ? " quod he ;
 " Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare ;
 For evere upon the ground I se thee stare.

1868. *herying*, E² *heryen*.

1871. *tombe*, E *temple*.

1874. *yonge Hugh of Lyncoln*,
 said to have been cruci-
 fied by the Jews in 1255.

1881. *Whan seyð*, etc., note
 that these " murye

wordes " are in stanzas
 instead of the usual
 couplets.

1883. *japen tho*, so Corp.² ; E
japen to, H to *jape*.

1884. *me*, glossed s. *Chaucer*.

Approché neer, and looke up murily.
 Now war yow, sires, and lat this man have place ;
 He in the waast is shape as wel as I ; 1890
 This were a popet in an arm tenbrace
 For any womman smal, and fair of face.
 He semeth elvyssh by his contenance,
 For unto no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somewhat, syn oother folk han sayd ; 1895
 Telle us a tale of myrthe, and that anon."
 "Hoosté," quod I, "ne beth nat yvele apayd,
 For oother talé certés kan I noon,
 But of a rym I lernéd longe agoon." 1899
 "Ye, that is good," quod he, "now shul we heere
 Som deyntee thyng, me thynketh by his cheere !"

CHAUCER'S TALE OF SIR THOPAS

Heere bigynneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas

THE FIRST FIT

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
 And I wol tellé verrayment

1888. *up*, om. H⁴.

1890. *in the waast*, etc., it has been suggested that this was said in derision of the poet's slimness, but his portraits represent him as stout.

1891. *tenbrace*, to embrace.

1897. *yvele apayd*, ill-pleased.

1902. *lordes*, H³ *lordyns*.

Chaucers Tale of Sir Thopas: "The Rime of Sir Thopas was clearly intended to ridicule the"

Of myrthe and of solas ;
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent 1905
 In bataille and in tourneyment,
 His name was sire Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,
 In Flaundrés al biyonde the see,
 At Poperyng, in the place ; 1910
 His fader was a man ful free,
 And lord he was of that contree,
 As it was Goddés grace.

Sire Thopas wax a doghty swayn ;
 Whit was his face as payndemayn, 1915
 Hise lippés rede as rose ;
 His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
 And I yow telle in good certáyn
 He hadde a semely nose.

'palpable gross' fictions of the common Rimer of that age, and still more, perhaps, the meanness of their language and versification. It is full of phrases taken from *Isumbras*, *Li Beaus Desconnus*, and other romances in the same style, which are still extant" (Tyrwhitt). Those who love the old romances will be inclined to rank this among the few parodies, which, while turning their originals into

ridicule, catch so much of their charm that they are doubly delightful.

1905. *gent*, gentle.

1910. *Poperyng*, not far from Ostend.
place, chief house.

1915. *payndemayn*, panis domini, fine bread.

1917. *rode*, ruddiness.
scarlet in grayn, scarlet dye.

His heer, his berd, was lyk saffroun, 1920
That to his girdel raughte adoun ;

Hise shoon of cordéwane.
Of Bruggés were his hosen broun,
His robé was of syklatoun
That costé many a jane. 1925

He koudé hunte at wildé deer,
And ride an haukyng for river
With grey goshawk on honde ;
Ther-to he was a good archeer ;
Of wrastlyng was ther noon his peer, 1930
Ther any ram shal stonde.

Ful many a maydé bright in bour
They moorné for hym, *paramour*,
Whan hem were bet to slepe ;
But he was chaast, and no lechour, 1935
And sweete as is the brembul flour
That bereth the redé hepe.

And so bifel upon a day,
For sothe, as I yow tellé may,
Sire Thopas wolde out ride ; 1940
He worth upon his steedé gray,

1921. *raughte*, reached.

1924. *syklatoun*, fine cloth.

1925. *jane*, a small coin from
Genoa.

1927. *for river*, i.e. by the
river-side.

1931. *any ram*, the usual prize,
cp. l. 548, Group A.

1932. *a mayde*, H² om. *a*.

1937. *hepe*, hip.

1938. *bifel*, H² *it fel*.

1941. *worth upon*, mounted.

And in his hand a launcégay,
A long swerd by his side.

He priketh thurgh a fair forést
Ther-inne is many a wildé best, 1945
Ye, bothé bukke and hare ;
And as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, hym hadde almost
Bitidde a sory care.

Ther spryngen herbés grete and smale, 1950
The lycorys and cetéwale
And many a clowe-gylofre,
And notémuge to putte in ale,
Wheither it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre. 1955

The briddés synge, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papéjay,
That joye it was to heere.
The thrustelcok made eek hir lay,
The wodédowve upon the spray 1960
She sang ful loude and cleere.

Sire Thopas fil in love-longýnge
Al whan he herde the thrustel synge,
And pryked as he were wood ;

1949. *Bitidde*, befallen.1951. *cetewale*, valerian.1957. *papejay*, parrot.1963. *thrustel*, H *briddes*.1964. *wood*, mad.

His fairè steede in his prikyng 1965
 So swattè that men myghte him wrynge,
 His sydès were al blood.

Sire Thopas eek so wery was
 For prikyng, on the softè gras,—
 So fiers was his corage,— 1970
 That doun he leyde him in that plas
 To make his steedè som solas,
 And gaf hym good forage.

“O seïnte Marie, *benedicite* !
 What eyleth this love at me 1975
 To byndè me so soore ?
 Me dreméd al this nyght, *pardee*,
 An Elf-queene shal my lemman be
 And slepe under my goore.

“An Elf-queene wol I love, y-wis, 1980
 For in this world no womman is
 Worthy to be my make
 In towne.
 Alle othere women I forsake,
 And to an Elf-queene I me take 1985
 By dale and eek by downe.”

1971. *that plas*, H³ *the place*.
 1979. *under my goore*, at my
 side.
 1982. *make*, *mate*.

1983. *In towne* : the metre here
 is a compromise between
 the usual stanza and the
 longer one which follows.

Into his sadel he clamb anon,
 And priketh over stile and stoon
 An Elf-queene for tespye ;
 Til he so longe hadde riden and goon 1990
 That he foond in a pryvé woon
 The contree of Fairye,
 So wilde ;
 For in that contree was ther noon
 That to him dorsté ryde or goon, 1995
 Neither wyf ne childe ;

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
 His namé was sire Olifaunt,
 A perilous man of dede.
 He seyde, "Child, by Termagaunt ! 2000
 But if thou prike out of myn haunt,
 Anon I sle thy steede
 With mace !
 Heere is the queene of Faïrye,
 With harpe, and pipe, and symphonye, 2005
 Dwellynge in this place."

The child seyde, "Al so moote I thee !
 Tomorwe wol I meete with thee,
 Whan I have myn armoure.
 And yet I hopé, *par ma fay*, 2010
 That thou shalt with this launcégay

1991. *woon*, place.1995. *That to him*, etc., from
H only ; E⁴ omit.2005. *pipe*, H *lute*.2007. *Al so moote I thee*, so
may I thrive.

Abyen it ful sowre ;
 Thy mawe
 Shal I percen, if I may,
 Er it be fully pryme of day, 2015
 For heere thow shalt be slawe."

Sire Thopas drow abak ful faste ;
 This geant at hym stonés caste
 Out of a fel staf-slynge ;
 But faire escapeth sire Thopas ; 2020
 And al it was thurgh Goddés gras,
 And thurgh his fair berynge.

Yet listeth, lordés, to my tale
 Murier than the nightyngale,
 For now I wol yow rowne 2025
 How sir Thopas, with sydés smale,
 Prikyng over hill and dale,
 Is comen agayn to towne.

His murie men comanded he
 To make hym bothé game and glee, 2030
 For nedés moste he fighte
 With a geaunt, with hevedes thre,
 For *paramour* and jolitee
 Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

2014. *Shal I percen*, E² insert
 thyn hauberk before *shal*.

2015. *pryme*, 9 A.M.

2016. *thow shalt*, H³ *shaltow*.

2025. *For now*, om. E².
 rowne, whisper.

2032. *hevedes*, heads.

"Do come," he seyde, "my mynstrales,
 And geestours for to tellen tales,
 Anon in myn armýnge ;
 Of rómances that been roiales,
 Of Popés and of Cardinales,
 And eek of love-likýnge."

2035

2040

They sette hym first the sweeté wyn
 And mede eek in a mazelyn,
 And roial spicerye ;
 And gyngébreed that was ful fyn,
 And lycorys, and eek comyn,
 With sugre that is so trye.

2045

He didé next his whité leere
 Of clooth of laké, fyn and cleere,
 A breech and eek a sherte ;
 And next his sherte an akétoun,
 And over that an haubergeoun
 For Percyng of his herte ;

2050

And over that a fyn hawberk,
 Was al y-wroght of Jewés werk,
 Ful strong it was of plate ;
 And over that his cote armour,

2055

2035. *Do come*, cause to come.
 2041. *the*, om. E³.
 2042. *mazelyn*, maple-bowl.
 2045. *comyn*, cummin.
 2046. *so*, om. H⁶.

2046. *trye*, choice.
 2047. *leere*, skin.
 2048. *clooth of lake*, linen cloth.
 fyn, H *why*.
 2050. *aketoun*, a quilted tunic.

As whit as is a lilye flour,
In which he wol debate.

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-inne was a borés heed, 2060
A charbocle bisyde ;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
“ Bitydé what bityde ! ”

Hise jambeux were of quyrboilly, 2065
His swerdés shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright ;
His sadel was of rewel boon ;
His brydel as the sonnè shoon,
Or as the mooné light. 2070

His spere it was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre, and no thyng pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde ;
His steedé was al dappull-gray,
It gooth an ambil in the way 2075
Ful softely and rounde
In londe.
Loo, lordés myne, heere is a Fit ;

2058. *debate*, do battle.2061. *charbocle*, carbuncle.
bisyde, H⁴ by his syde.2065. *jambeux*, leggings.2065. *quyrboilly*, leather boiled
and hardened.2067. *laton*, brass.2068. *rewel boon*, smooth [?] bone.

If ye wol any moore of it
 To telle it wol I fonde. 2080

THE SECOND FIT

Now holde youre mouth, *par charitee*,
 Bothé knyght and lady free,
 And herkneth to my spelle ;
 Of batailles and of chivalry,
 And of ladyës love-drury, 2085
 Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speken of romauns of prys,—
 Of Hornchild, and of Ypotys,
 Of Beves and of sir Gy,
 Of sir Lybeux and Pleyn-damour ; 2090
 But sir Thopas he bereth the flour
 Of roial chivalry !

His goodè steede al he bistrood,
 And forth upon his wey he rood,
 As sparcle out of the bronde ; 2095
 Upon his creest he bar a tour,

2085. *And of, etc., H reads of
 ladys love and drew-
 eryl.*

love-drury, courtship.

2087. *romauns, E^s romances.*

2089. *of sir Gy, H^s om. of.*

2090. *sir Lybeux, Li biaux*

*desconneus, or Libius
 Disconius, "the fair un-
 known."*

2091. *he, om. H².*

2093. *al, om. H².*

2094. *rood, H⁶ glood.*

2095. *sparcle, H³ spark.*

And ther-inne stiked a lillie flour,—
 God shilde his cors fro shonde !

And for he was a knyght auntrous,
 He noldé slepen in noon hous, 2100
 But liggen in his hooode ;
 His brighté helm was his wonger,
 And by hym baiteth his dextrer
 Of herbés fyne and goode ;

Hym self drank water of the well, 2105
 As dide the knyght sire Percyvell,
 So worthy under wede ;
 Til on a day——

*Heere the Hoost stynteth Chaucer of his Tale of
 Thopas*

“ Na moore of this, for Goddés dignitee ! ”
 Quod ouré Hosté, “ for thou makest me 2110
 So wery of thy verray lewédnesse
 That, also wisly God my soulé blesse,
 Min erès aken of thy drasty speche.
 Now swich a rym the devel I biteche !
This may wel be rym dogerel,” quod he. 2115

2098. *shonde*, harm.

2099. *auntrous*, adventurous.

2101. *liggen*, lie.

2102. *wonger*, pillow.

2103. *dextrer*, steed.

2107. *worthy under wede*, brave
 under arms.

2111. *lewednesse*, stupidity.

2113. *of, H for.*
drasty, full of dregs,
 worthless.

2114. *biteche*, commit to.

"Why so?" quod I; "why wiltow letté me
Moore of my talé than another man,
Syn that it is the besté ryme I kan?"

"By God," quod he, "for pleynly at a word,
Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord;" 2120
Thou doost noght ellés but despendest tyme;
Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme.

Lat se wher thou kanst tellen aught in geeste,
Or telle in prose somewhat, at the leeste, 2124
In which ther be som murthe, or some doctryne."

"Gladly," quod I, "by Goddés sweeté pyne!
I wol yow telle a litel thyng in prose
That oghté liken yow, as I suppose,
Or elles, certés, ye been to daungerous.

It is a moral talé vertuous, 2130
Al be it told somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sundry folk, as I shal yow devyse.

"As thus; ye woot that every Evaungelist
That telleth us the peyne of Jhesu Crist
Né seith nat alle thyng as his felawe dooth;" 2135
But nathélees hir sentence is al sooth,
And alle acorden as in hire sentence,
Al be ther in hir tellyng difference;

For somme of hem seyn moore, and sommé lesse,
Whan they his pitous passioun expresse, 2140

2116. *lette*, hinder.2118. *ryme*, E *tale*.2123. *ought in geeste*, some
prose story.2129. *daungerous*, difficult to
please.

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2131. *told*, E *take*.2135. *nat*, om. H¹.2137. *sentence*, meaning.2139. *lesse*, E⁴ *seyn lesse*.

U

I meene of Marké, Mathew, Luc and John,—
But doutelees hir sentence is all oon.

“Therfore, lordyngs alle, I yow biseche

~~If that ye thynke I varie as in my speche,~~

As thus, though that I tellé somewhat moore 2145

~~Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifoore~~

~~Comprehended in this litel tretys heere,~~

~~To enforcé with theeffect of my mateere ;~~

And though I nat the samé wordés seye,

As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye, 2150

~~Blameth me nat, for as in my sentence~~

~~Ye shul not fynden moche difference~~

~~Fro the sentence of this tretys lyte~~

~~After the which this murye tale I write ;~~

And therfore herkneth what that I shal seye, 2155

And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.”

CHAUCER'S TALE OF MELIBÆUS

Heere bigynneth Chaucer's Tale of Melibee

A yong man called Melibeus, myghty and riche,
bigat up on his wyf, that called was Prudence, a
doghter which that called was Sophie.

2153. *lyte*, little.

2154. *murye*, H *litel*.

Chaucer's Tale of Melibee:

this very dull dissertation is taken from Jean de Meung's French version of the *Liber Consolationis et Consilii* of Albertano of

Brescia, composed ca. 1238.

2157. *a doghter which that called was Sophie*, the first of many decasyllabic cadences in the early pages of Chaucer's prose.

Upon a day bifel, that he for his desport is went into the feeldes, hym to pleye; his wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast y-shette. [2160] Thre of hise olde foes han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by wyndowes been entred, and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places,—this is to seyn, in hir feet, in hir handes, in hir erys, in hir nose, and in hire mouth,—and leften hire for deed, and wenten away.

Whan Melibeus retourned was into his hous and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man, rentynge his clothes, gan to wepe and crie.

Prudence, his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte hym of his wepyng for to stynte; [2165] but nat for-thy he gan to crie and wepen evere lenger the moore.

This noble wyf Prudence remembred hire upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is The Remedie of Love, where as he seith, "He is a fool that destourbeth the mooder to wepen in the deeth of hire child, til she have wept hir fille, as for a certein tyme, and thanne shal man doon his diligence with amyable wordes hire to reconforte, and preyen hire of hir wepyng for to stynte." For which resoun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and crie as for a certein space; [2170] and whan she

2160. *lyk a mad man*, H *lyk a man mad*.

2165. *for-thy*, therefore.
and *wepen*, om. H.

2165. *Ovide, in his book: De Rem. Am. i. 127-30:*

"Quis matrem, nisi mentis
inops, in funere nati
Flere vetat?"

saugh hir tyme, she seyde hym in this wise : "Allas, my lord," quod she, "why make ye youre self for to be lyk a fool ! For sothe it aperteneth nat to a wys man to maken swiche a sorwe. Yourre doghter with the grace of God shal warisshe and escape ; and, al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oughte nat, as for hir deeth, youre self to destroye. Senek seith, 'The wise man shal nat take to greet discomfort for the deeth of his children, [2175] but, certes, he sholde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abideth the deeth of his owene propre persone.'"

This Melibeus answerde anon, and seyde, "What man," quod he, "sholde of his wepyng stente that hath so greet a cause for to wepe ? Jhesu Crist, oure Lord, hymself wepte for the deeth of Lazarus hys freend."

Prudence answerde, "Certes, wel I woot attempree wepyng is no thyng deffended to hym that sorweful is amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted hym to wepe.

"The Apostle Paul unto the Romainys writeth, 'Man shal rejoyse with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen ;' [2180] but though

2170. *warisshe*, be cured.

Senek seith : Ep. lxxiv.
29 : "Non affligitur sapiens liberorum vel amicorum amissione, eodem animo enim fert illorum mortem quo suam expectat." I take this and other quota-

tions from Dr. Thor Sundby's edition of the Latin text (Chauc. Soc. 1873).

2175. *propre*, om. H.

attempree, temperate.
deffended, forbidden.

attempree wepyng be y-graunted, outrageous wepyng certes is deffended. Measure of wepyng sholde be conserved, after the loore that techeth us Senek : 'Whan that thy frend is deed,' quod he, 'lat nat thyne eyen to moyste been of teeris, ne to muche drye ; although the teeris come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat falle, and whan thou hast for-goon thy freend, do diligence to gete another freend, and this is moore wysdom than for to wepe for thy freend which that thou hast lorn, for ther-inne is no boote ;' and therfore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of youre herte. [2185] Remembre yow that Jhesus Syrak seith, 'A man that is joyous, and glad in herte, it hym conserveth florissynge in his age, but soothly sorweful herte maketh hise bones drye.' He seith eek thus, that sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man. Salomon seith that 'right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth sorwe to the herte ;' wherfore us oghte as wel in the deeth of oure children as in the losse of othere goodes temporels have pacience.

"Remembre yow up on the pacient Job. Whan he hadde lost his children and his temporeel substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacion, yet seyde he thus : [2190] 'Oure

2180. *conserved*, E⁸ *considered*, but the Latin text has *servandus*.

Senek, Ep. lxiii. 1: "Nec sicci sint oculi tui, amiso amico, nec fluant ; lacrimandum est, et non

plorandum" ; *ib.* 9 : "Sanctius est amicum reparare quam flere."

2185. *Jhesus Syrak*, a quotation from *Eccles. xxx. 25* is here omitted. The text occurs in *Prov. xvii. 22*.

Lord [hath given it me ; oure Lord] hath biraft it me ; right as oure Lord hath wold, right so it is doon ; blessed be the name of oure Lord ! ”

To thise foreseide thynges answerde Melibeus unto his wyf Prudence : “ Alle thy wordes,” quod he, “ been sothe, and therwith profitable, but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so greuously that I noot what to doone.”

“ Lat calle,” quod Prudence, “ thy trewe freendes alle, and thy lynage whiche that been wise. Telleth youre cas and herkneth what they seye in conseil-lyng, and yow governe after hire sentence. Salomon seith, ‘ Werk alle thy thynges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente.’ ”

Thanne by the conseil of his wyf Prudence this Melibeus leet callen a greet congregacioun of folk, [2195] as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of hise olde enemys reconsiled, as by hir semblaunt, to his love and into his grace, and therewithal ther coomen somme of hise neighebores that diden hym reverence moore for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. Ther coomen also ful many subtille flatereres, and wise advocatz, lerned in the lawe.

And whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful wise shewed hem his cas, and by

2190. [*hath given*, etc.] supplied from the Latin and French texts.
hath wold, H *wil*.
trewely, H *sothly*.
wise, H *trewe and wise*.

2190. *Telleth youre cas*, H *telleth hem your grevaunce*.
thou shalt never repente, H *the thar never rewe of folk*, H *of peple*.

the manere of his speche it semed wel that in herte he baar a crueel ire, redy to doon vengeance upon hise foes, and sodeynly desired that the werre sholde bigynne, [2200] but natheles, yet axed he hire conseil upon this matiere.

A surgien, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wise, up roos and to Melibeus seyde as ye may heere : "Sire," quod he, "as to us surgiens aperteneth that we do to every wight the beste that we kan, where as we been withholde, and to oure pacientz that we do no damage ; wherfore it happeth many tyme and ofte that whan twey men han everich wounded oother, oon same surgien heeleth hem bothe ; wherfore unto oure art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. [2205] But certes, as to the warisshynge of youre doghter, al be it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisynesse fro day to nyght that with the grace of God she shal be hool and sound as soone as is possible."

Almoost right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe woordes moore ; that right as maladies been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe werre by vengeance.

Hise neigheborès ful of envye, hise feyned freendes that semeden reconsiled, and hiseflateres maden semblant of wepyng, and empeireden and aggregateden

2200. *withholde*, retained.

2205. *warisshynge*, healing.

2205. *empeireden*, H *appaired*,
made worse.

aggregateden, aggravated.

muchel of this matiere, in preisyngre greetly Melibee, of myght, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despisyngre the power of hise adversaries, [2210] and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken hym on hise foes, and bigynne werre.

Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by conseil of othere that were wise, and seide, "Lordynges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevy thyng, and an heigh matiere, by cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme comyngre been possible to fallen for this same cause, and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe, [2215] for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matiere; wherfore, Melibeus, this is oure sentence; we conseilte yow aboven alle thyng, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepyngre of thy propre persone in swich a wise that thou wante noon espie, ne wacche, thy persone for to save; and after that we conseilte that in thyn hous thou sette sufficeant garnisoun, so that they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende; but certes, for to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. Wherfore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme, [2220] for the commune proverbe seith

2210. *foes, and bigynne, H*
adversaries be begyn-
nyngre of.

2210. *by resoun, H by cause.*
 2215. *propre persone, H body.*
garnisoun, garrison.

thus: 'He that soone deemeth, soone shal repente;' and eek men seyn that thilke juge is wys that soone understondeth a matiere and juggeth by leyser; for, al be it so that alle taryng be anoyful, algates it is nat to repreve in gevyng of juggement, ne in vengeance takyng, whan it is sufficeant and resonable; and that shewed oure Lord Jhesu Crist by ensample, for whan that the womman that was taken in avowtrie was broght in his presence to knowen what sholde be doon with hire persone,—al be it so that he wiste wel hym self what that he wolde answer,—yet ne wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twies; and by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of God, conseilte thee thyng that shal be profitable."

[2225] Up stirten thanne the yonge folk atones, and the mooste partie of that compaignye scorned the wise olde men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden that "Right so as, whil that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so men sholde wreken hir wronges while that they been fresshe and newe;" and with loud voys they criden, "Werre! werre!"

Up roos tho oon of thise olde wise, and with his hand made contenaunce that men sholde holden hem stille, and geven hym audience.

"Lordynges," quod he, "ther is ful many a man

2220. *nat to repreve*, II *no*
reproof.
avowtrie, adultery.

2225. *atones* (at once), H
anoon at oones.

that crieth 'Werre! werre!' that woot ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his bigynnyng hath so greet an entryng and so large, that every wight may entre whan hym liketh and lightly fynde werre; [2230] but certes, what ende that shal ther-of bifalle it is nat light to knowe; for soothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne ther is ful many a child unborn of his mooder that shal sterve yong by cause of that ilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe, and dye in wrecchednesse; and therefore, er that any werre bigynne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacioun."

And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resons, wel ny alle atones bigonne they to rise fore to breken his tale, and beden hym ful ofte hise wordes for to abregge; for soothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heeren hise wordes, his sermon hem anoieth; [2235] for Jhesus Syrak seith, that "musik in wepyng is a noyous thyng;" this is to seyn, as muche availleth to speken bifore folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as it s to synge biforn hym that wepeth. And this wise man saugh that hym wanted audience, and al shamefast he sette hym doun agayn; for Salomon seith, "Ther as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke."

"I see wel," quod this wise man, "that the commune proverbe is sooth, 'That good conseil wanteth whan it is moost nede.'"

2235. *is a noyous thyng*: Chaucer here hardly brings out the point of the text,

which runs: "*Musica in luctu est importuna narratio*" (Ecclus. xxii. 6).

Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk that prively in his eere conseilled hym certeyn thyng, and conseilled hym the contrarie in general audience.

[2240] Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anon, he consented to hir conseillyng and fully affermed hire sentence.

Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoope hym for to wreken hym on hise foes, and to bigynne werre, she in ful humble wise, whan she saugh hir tyme, seide to hym thise wordes.

"My lord," quod she, "I yow biseche, as hertely as I dar and kan, ne haste yow nat to faste, and for alle gerdons, as geveth me audience; for Piers Alfonse seith, 'Who so that dooth to that oother good or harm, haste thee nat to quiten it; for in this wise thy freend wole abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger lyve in drede.' The proverbe seith, 'He hasteth wel that wisely kan abyde, and in wikked haste is no profit.'"

[2245] This Melibee answerde unto his wyf Prudence, "I purpose nat," quod he, "to werke by thy conseil, for many causes and resouns; for certes, every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool. This is to seyn,

2240. *shoope hym*, purposed.

on hise foes, H of his
enemies.

for alle gerdons, at all
costs.

2240. *Piers Alfonse seith: Dis-*
ciplina Clericalis, xxv.
15: "Ne properes ulli
reddere mutuum boni vel
mali, quia diutius expect-
abit te amicus, et diutius
timebit te inimicus."

if I, for thy conseillyng, wolde chaungen thynges that been ordeyned and affermed by so manye wyse. Secoundly, I seye that alle wommen been wikke, and noon good of hem alle; for, 'Of a thousand men,' seith Salomon, 'I foond a good man, but certes, of alle wommen, good womman foond I nevere;' and also, certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it sholde seme that I hadde geve to thee over me the maistrie, and God forbode that it so weere! for Jhesus Syrak seith, that if the wyf have maistrie she is contrarious to hir housbonde; [2250] and Salomon seith, 'Nevere in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne geve no power over thyself, for bettre it were that thy children aske of thy persone thynges that hem nedeth than thou be thyself in the handes of thy children;' and if I wolde werke by thy conseillyng, certes, my conseillyng moste som tyme be secree til it were tyme that it moste be knowe, and this ne may noght be. For it is written, 'The janglerie of women can hide thyngis that they wot nought;' furthermore, the philosopre saith, 'In wykke conseyl women venquysse men;' and for these reasons I ought not to make use of thy counsel."

Whanne dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde

2245. *ordeyned and*, om. H².

2250. *thy conseillyng*, H *it*.

*For it is written . . .
thy counsel*, om. EH²,
supplied from Camb.
MS. in accordance

with Latin and French. The quotations are from Seneca, *Controu.* ii. 13. 12: "Garrulitas mulierum id solum novit celare quod nescit"; and Publilius Syrus, *Sent.* 324: "Malo in consilio feminæ vincunt viros."

liked for to seye, thanne axed she of hym licence for to speke, and seyde in this wise : [2255] "My lord," quod she, "as to youre firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered ; for I seye that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thyng is chaunged, or elles whan the thyng semeth ootherweyes than it was biforn ; and mooreover, I seye that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourne youre emprise, and natheles ye weyve to perfourne thilke same emprise by juste cause, men sholde nat seyn therfore that ye were a lier ne forsworn, for the book seith that the wise man maketh no lesyng whan he turneth his corage to the bettre, and al be it so that youre emprise be establissed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke ordinaunce but yow like ; for the trouthe of thynges and the profit been rather founden in fewe folk that been wise and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk ther every man crieth and clatereth what that hym liketh ; soothly, swich multitude is nat honeste.

[2260] "As to the seconde resoun, whereas ye seyn that alle wommen been wikke ; save youre grace, certes ye despisen alle wommen in this wyse, and 'he that al despiseth al displeth,' as seith the book ; and Senec seith, that who so wole have sapience shal no man

2255. *the book seith* : Chaucer's translation of the "Scriptum est" or "il est escript" with which the Latin and French texts introduce an unassigned quotation.

2255. *thar*, need.

2260. *and he that al . . . the book*, E. om.

Senec seith : in the supposititious *De Quat. Virtutibus*, cap. iii.

despise, but he shal gladly techen the science that he kan withouten presumpcioun or pride, and swiche thynges as he nought ne kan he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquire of lasse folk than hym self; and, sire, that ther hath been many a good womman may lightly be preved, for certes, sire, oure Lord Jhesu Crist wolde nevere have descended to be born of a womman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke; [2265] and after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, oure Lord Jhesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deeth to lyve, appeered rather to a womman than to hise Apostles; and though that Salomon seith that he ne foond nevere womman good, it folweth nat therfore that alle womman ben wikke, for though that he ne foond no good womman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe; or elles, per aventure, the entente of Salomon was this, that, as in sovereyn bounte, he foond no womman; that is to seyn that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee, save God allone,—as he hym self recordeth in hys evaungelie,—[2270] for ther nys no creature so good that hym ne wanteth somwhat of the perfeccioun of God, that is his maker.

“Youre thridde resoun is this,—ye seyn if ye governe yow by my conseil it sholde seme that ye hadde geve me the maistrie and the lordshipe over youre persone. Sire, save youre grace, it is nat so, for if it were so that no man sholde be conseilled but

2260. *despise*, H⁵ *despraye*.
2265. *rather*, sooner.

2270. *by my conseil*, H² *by conseil of me*.

oonly of hem that hadden lordshipe and maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte, for soothly thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free choys wheither he wole werke by that conseil or noon.

“And as to youre fourthe resoun; ther ye seyn that the janglerie of wommen hath hyd thynges that they wiste noght, as who seith that a womman kan nat hyde that she woot, [2275] sire, thise wordes been understonde of wommen that been jangleresses and wikked, of whiche wommen men seyn that thre thynges dryven a man out of his hous,—that is to seyn, smoke, droppying of reyn, and wikked wyves; and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that it were bettre dwelle in desert than with a womman that is riotous, and, sire, by youre leve, that am nat I; for ye haan ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience, and eek how wel that I kan hyde and hele thynges that men oghte secreely to hyde.

[2280] “And soothly, as to youre fifthe resoun, where as ye seyn that in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men, God woot thilke resoun stant heere in no stede; for, understood now, ye asken conseil to do wikkednesse, and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and youre wif restreyneth thilke wikked purpos and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil, certes youre wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. Thus

2270. *hath hyd*, H⁶ *can hyde*.
wiste noght, H *wot not of*;
so the rest omitting *of*.

2275. *of swiche wommen*, E³
om. *of*.
hele, conceal.

sholde ye understonde the philosophre that seith, 'In wikked conseil wommen venquisschen hir housbondes.'

[2285] "And ther as ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples, that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yet been, and hir conseils ful hoolsome and profitable. Eek som men han seyð that the conseillynge of wommen is outhere to deere, or elles to litel of pris; but, al be it so that ful many a womman is badde and hir conseil vile and noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good womman and ful discrete and wise in conseillynge.

"Loo, Jacob, by good conseil of his mooder Rebekka, wan the benysoun of Yssak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle hise bretheren: Judith, by hire good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofernus, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it: [2290] Abygail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the kyng that wolde have slayn hym, and apaysed the ire of the kyng by hir wit and by hir good conseillyng: Hester enhaunced greetly by hir good conseil the peple of God in the regne of Assuerus the kyng: and the same bountee in good conseillyng of many a good womman may men telle, and moore over, whan oure Lord hadde creat Adam oure forme fader, he seyde in this wise: 'It is nat good to been a man

2285. *ensamples*, H *resons* and
ensamples.
pris, price, value.
benysoun, H *blessyng*.

2285. *good conseil*, H om. *good*.
have al destroyed it, H⁴
it al destroye.
2290. *forme*, first.

alloone, make we to hym an helpe semblable to hym self.'

[2295] "Heere may ye se that if that wommen were nat goode and hir conseils goode and profitable, oure Lord God of hevene wolde nevere han wroght hem, ne called hem 'help' of man, but rather confusioun of man. And ther seyde oones a clerk in two vers, 'What is bettre than Gold? Jaspre. What is bettre than Jaspre? Wisedoom. And what is better than Wisedoom? Womman. And what is bettre than a good Womman? No thyng.' And, sire, by manye of othre resouns may ye seen that manye wommen been goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable, [2300] and therfore, sire, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restoore yow youre doghter hool and sound, and eek I wol do to yow so muche that ye shul have honour in this cause."

Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde thus: "I see wel that the word of Salomon is sooth. He seith that wordes that been spoken discreetly, by ordinaunce, been honycombes, for they geven swetnesse to the soule and hoolsomnesse to the body; and, wyf, by-cause of thy sweete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thyng."

[2305] "Now, sire," quod dame Prudence, "and syn ye vouchesauf to been governed by my conseil, I wol

2295. *in two vers:*

"Quid melius auro? Jaspis. Quid jaspide? Sensus.
Quid sensu? Mulier. Quid Muliere? Nihil."

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enforme yow how ye shul governe youre self in chesyng of youre conseilours. Ye shul first in alle youre werkes mekely biseken to the heighe God that he wol be youre conseilour, and shapeth yow to swich entente that he geve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone: 'At alle tymes thou shalt blesse God and praye hym to dresse thy weyes, and looke that alle thy conseils been in hym for everemoore.' Seint Jame eek seith, 'If any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of God.' [2310] And afterward, thanne shul ye taken conseil of youre self and examyne wel youre thoghtes of swich thyng as yow thynketh that is best for youre profit, and thanne shul ye dryve fro youre herte thre thynges that been contrariouse to good conseil,—that is to seyn, ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse.

"First, he that axeth conseil of hymself, certes he moste been withouten ire, for manye causes. The firste is this: he that hath greet ire and wratthe in hym self, he weneth alwey that he may do thyng that he may nat do. [2315] And secoundely, he that is irous and wrooth, he ne may nat wel deme, and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseil. The thridde is this, that he that is irous and wrooth, as seith Senec, ne may nat speke but blameful thynges, and with hise viciouse wordes he stireth oother folk to angre and to ire. And eek, sire, ye moste dryve

2315. *as seith Senec*, the quotation seems to be from Publil. Syrus, *Sent.* 281.

2315. *but blameful*, E *but he blame*.

coveitise out of youre herte, [2320] for the Apostle seith that coveitise is roote of alle harmes ; and trust wel that a coveitous man ne kan nocht deme, ne thynke, but oonly to fulfille the ende of his coveitise, and certes, that ne may nevere been accompliced, for evere the moore habundaunce that he hath of richesse the moore he desireth. And, sire, ye moste also dryve out of youre herte hastifnesse, for certes, ye ne may nat deeme for the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte, [2325] for as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this, that 'he that soone deemeth, soone repenteth.' Sire, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun, for certes som thyng that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie.

"Whan ye han taken conseil of youre self and han deemed by good deliberacion swich thyng as you semeth best, thanne rede I yow that ye kepe it secree. [2330] Biwrey nat youre conseil to no persone, but if so be that ye wenen sikerly that thurgh youre biwreyng youre condicioun shal be to yow the moore profitable ; for Jhesus Syrak seith, 'Neither to thy foo, ne to thy frend, discovere nat thy secree, ne thy folie, for they wol geve yow audience and lookynge to supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence.' Another clerk seith, that scarsly shaltou fynden any persone that may kepe conseil sikerly.

2325. *as you semeth, E as you list.*

2330. *Another clerk: pseudo-Seneca, De Moribus, Sent. 16.*

"The book seith, 'Whil that thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun, [2335] and whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any wight he holdeth thee in his snare;' and therfore yow is bettre to hyde youre conseil in youre herte than praye hem to whom ye han biwreyed youre conseil that he wole kepen it cloos and stille; for Seneca seith, 'If so be that thou ne mayst nat thyn owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen any oother wight thy conseil sikerly to kepe?'

"But nathelees, if thou wene sikerly that the biwreiying of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in the bettre plyt, thanne shaltou tellen hym thy conseil in this wise: first, thou shalt make no semblant wheither thee were levere pees or werre, or this or that, ne shewe hym nat thy wille and thyn entente,—[2340] for trust wel, that comenli thise conseilours been flatereres, namely the conseilours of grete lordes, for they enforcen hem alwey rather to speken plesante wordes, enclynynge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable; and therfore men seyn, that the riche man hath seeld good conseil, but if he have it of hym self.

"And after that thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyne enemys; [2345] and as touchynge thy

2330. *The book seith*: Petrus
Alfonsi, *Discip. Cler.*
iv. 3.

2335. *Seneca seith*: pseudo-
Seneca, *De Moribus*,

Sent. 16: "Si tibi ipsi
non imperasti ut taceres,
quomodo ab alio silen-
tium quaeris?"

2340. *seeld*, seldom.

freendes thou shalt considere wiche of hem that been moost feithful and moost wise, and oldest, and most approved in conseillyng, and of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil as the caas requireth.

"I seye that first ye shul clepe to youre conseil youre freendes that been trewe, for Salomon seith that 'Right as the herte of a man deliteth in savour that is soote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes geveth swetenesse to the soule;' he seith also, 'Ther may no thyng be likned to the trewe freend, [2350] for certes gold ne silver beth nat so muche worth as the goode wyl of a trewe freend;' and eek, he seith that 'A trewe freend is a strong deffense; who so that hym fyndeth, certes, he fyndeth a greet tresour.'

"Thanne shul ye eek considere if that youre trewe freendes been discrete and wise, for the book seith, 'Axe alwey thy conseil of hem that been wise;' and by this same resoun shul ye clepen to youre conseil of youre freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thynges, and been approved in conseillynges; for the book seith that in the olde men is the sapience, and in longe tyme the prudence; [2355] and Tullius seith, that grete thynges ne been nat ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by delivernesse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche thre thynges ne been nat fieble by age, but certes, they

2355. *Tullius*: Cicero, *De Senect.* vi. 17: "Non viribus, non velocitatibus aut celeritate corporum res magnæ geruntur, sed consilio, auctoritate et scientia, quibus non modo non orbari, sed etiam augeri senectus solet."

enforcen and encreescen day by day. And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule; first, shul ye clepen to youre conseil a fewe of youre freendes that been especiale; for Salomon seith, 'Manye freendes have thou, but among a thousand, chese thee oon to be thy conseilour, for, al be it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk if it be nede.' But looke alwey that thy conseilours have thilke thre condicions that I have seyde bifore, that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wise, and of oold experience. [2360] And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon counsellour allone, for somtyme bihooveth it to been counselled by manye, for Salomon seith, 'Salvacioun of thynges is where as ther been manye conseilours.'

"Now, sith I have toold yow of which folk ye sholde been counselled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. First, ye shul eschue the conseillyng of fooles, for Salomon seith, 'Taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne kan noght conseilte but after his owene lust and his affeccoun.' The book seith that the propretee of a fool is this, 'He troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in hym self.' [2365] Thou shalt eek eschue the conseillyng of flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise youre persone by flaterye, than for to telle yow the sooth-fastnesse of thynges.

2360. *teche*, H² *telle*.

The book seith: Cicero,

Tusc. D. iii. 30. 37:

"Proprium est stultitiæ aliena vitia cernere, suorum autem oblivisci."

"Wherefore Tullius seith, 'Amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe the gretteste is flaterie;' and therfore is it moore nede that thou eschue and drede flatereres than any oother peple. The book seith, 'Thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the sweete wordes of flaterynge preiseres than fro the egre wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes.' Salomon seith that 'The wordes of a flaterere is a snare to chacche with innocentz.' He seith also that 'He that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche hym;' [2370] and therfore, seith Tullius, 'Enclyne nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taaketh no conseil of the wordes of flaterye;' and Caton seith, 'Avyse thee wel, and eschue the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce.'

"And eek thou shalt eschue the conseillyng of thyne olde enemys that been reconsiled. The book seith that no wight retourneth sauflly into the grace of his olde enemy; and Isope seith, 'Ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had som tyme werre or

2365. *Tullius seith: De Amicitia*, xxv. 91.

*the gretteste is flaterie,
H that is the grettest,
flaterie.*

The book seith: pseudo-Seneca, De Quat. Virt.
cap. iii.: "Non acerba
verba, sed blanda,
timebis."

*flaterynge preiseres, H
flaterers.*

2370. *Tullius: De Offic.* i. 26.
91.

*Caton: Dionysius Cato,
De Morib.* iii. 5.

*The book seith: Publil.
Syrus, Sent.* 91.

*Isope seith: in the Latin
text the lines are quoted
as:*

"Ne confidatis secreta nec
bijs detegatis
Cum quibus egistis pugnae
discrimina tristia."

enemytee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil ;' [2375] and Seneca telleth the cause why : 'It may nat be,' seith he, 'that where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse ;' and therfore seith Salomon, 'In thyn olde foo trust nevere ;' for sikerly though thyn enemy be reconsiled and maketh thee chiere of humylitee, and lowteth to thee with his heed, ne trust hym nevere ; for certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee moore for his profit than for any love of thy person, by-cause that he deemeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he myghte nat wynne by strif or werre. And Peter Alfonce seith, 'Make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys, for if thou do hem bountee they wol perverten it into wikkednesse.'

[2380] "And eek thou most eschue the conseillyng of hem that been thy servantz and beren thee greet reverence, for peraventure they doon it moore for drede than for love. And therfore seith a philosophre in this wise : Ther is no wight parfitly trewe to hym that he to soore dredeth ;' and Tullius seith, 'Ther

2375. *Seneca* : not Seneca, but Publil. Syrus, *Sent.* 389 : "Numquam ubi diu fuit ignis deficit vapor."

dwelleth, H *leveth*.

warmnesse, H³ *hele*.

lowteth, bows.

Peter Alfonce : *Disc.*

Cler. iv. 4 : "Ne as-socieris inimicis tuis

. . . quæ enim male egeris notabunt, quæ vero bona fuerint, deviabunt."

2380. *doon*, H⁶ *say*.

Tullius seith : *De Off.* ii.

7. 25 : "Nulla vis imperii tanta est, quæ premente metu possit esse diuturna."

nys no myght so greet of any emperour that longe may endure, but if he have moore love of the peple than for-drede.'

"Thou shalt also eschue the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe, for they kan no conseil hyde, for Salomon seith, 'Ther is no privetee ther as regneth dronkenesse.' [2385] Ye shul also han in suspect the conseillyng of swich folk as conseilte yow a thyng prively and conseilte yow the contrarie openly; for Cassidorie seith that 'It is a manere sleighte to hyndre, whan he sheweth to doon a thyng openly and werketh prively the contrarie.'

"Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseillyng of wikked folk, for the book seith, 'The conseillyng of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude;' and David seith, 'Blisful is that man that hath nat folwed the conseilyng of shrewes.' Thou shalt also eschue the conseillyng of yong folk, for hir conseil is nat rype.

[2390] "Now, sire, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take youre conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, now wol I teche yow how ye shal examyne youre conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius.

"In the examynynge thanne of youre conseilour ye shul considere manye thynges. Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in thilke thyng that thou purposest and

2380. *for-drede*, terror; H
drede.

2385. *Cassidorie: Variar. Ep.*
Lib. x. Ep. 18: "Læ-

sionis genus est aliud
occulte dicere et aliud
velle monstrare."

2385. *have in suspect*, H *eschiewe*.

upon what thyng thou wolt have conseil, that verray trouthe be seyde and conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale, for he that seith fals may nat wel be counselled in that cas of which he lieth.

[2395] "And after this thou shalt considere the thynges that acorden to that thou purposest for to do by thy conseilours if resoun accorde therto, and eek if thy myght may atteine therto; and if the moore part and the bettre part of thy conseilours acorde therto or noon. Thanne shaltou considere what thyng shal folwe after hir conseillyng, as hate, pees, werre, grace, profit, or damage, and manye othere thynges. Thanne, of alle thise thynges, thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle othere thynges. Thanne shaltow considere of what roote is engendred the matiere of thy conseil, and what fruyt it may conceive and engendre. [2400] Thou shalt eek considere alle thise causes fro whennes they been sprongen.

"And whan ye han examyned youre conseil as I have seyde, and which partie is the bettre and moore profitable, and hast approved it by manye wise folk, and olde, thanne shaltou considere if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it a good ende; for certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde bigynne a thyng, but if he myghte parfourne it as hym oghte, ne no wight sholde take upon hym so hevy a charge that he myghte

2395. *after hir conseillyng, H⁶
of that (of hir) conseil-
seillyng.
Thanne, of alle, H⁶ And
in alle.*

2395. *conceive, E conserve.*

2400. *as hym oghte, H and
make therof a good ende.*

nat bere it; [2405] for the proverbe seith, 'He that to muche embraceth, distreyneth litel;' and Catoun seith, 'Assay to do swich thyng as thou hast power to doon, lest that the charge oppresse thee so soore that thee bihoveth to weyve thyng that thou hast bigonne.' And, if so be that thou be in doute wheither thou mayst parfourne a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than bigynne. And Piers Alphonse seith, 'If thou hast myght to doon a thyng of which thou most repente thee, it is better "nay" than "ye;"' this is to seyn, that thee is better holde thy tonge stille than for to speke.

[2410] "Thanne may ye understonde by strenger resons that if thou hast power to parfourne a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than bigynne. Wel seyn they that defenden every wight to assaye any thyng of which he is in doute wheither he may parfourne it or noon. And after, whan ye han examyned youre conseil, as I have seyde bifore, and knowen wel that ye may parfourne youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende.

"Now is it resoun and tyme that I shewe yow

2405. *distreyneth*, the proverb runs "qui nimis capit, parum stringit," so *distreyneth* must here mean "holds fast."

Catoun, De Mor. iii. 15:

"Quod potes id tempta,
operis ne pondere pressus
Succumbat labor, et frustra
temptata relinquo."

2405. *Piers Alphonse, Disc. Cler.* vi. 12. The Latin "si dicere metuas unde poeniteas semper est melius *non* quam *sic*" is much clearer than the English.

2410. *defenden*, forbid.

whanne and wherfore that ye may chaunge youre conseilours withouten youre repreve. Soothly a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth; [2415] for the lawe seith that upon thynges that newly bityden bihoveth newe conseil; and Senec seith, 'If thy conseil is comen to the eeris of thyn enemy, chaunge thy conseil.' Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil if so be that thou mayst fynde that by errour, or by oother cause, harm or damage may bityde. Also if thy conseil be dishonest, or ellis cometh of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy conseil, for the lawes seyn that alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value, [2420] and eek if so be that it be impossible or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept.

"And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that tilke conseil is wikked."

This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf, dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse: "Dame," quod he, "as yet in to this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me as in general how I shal governe me in the chesyng and in the withholdynge of my conseilours, but now wolde I fayn that ye wolde condescende in especial, [2425] and telle me how

2415. *ooother cause, H other
processe.*

*Also if, etc. H Also
thou change thy conseil*

if that it be dishoneste.
2420. *affermed, H affermed or
strengthened.*

covenably, suitably.

liketh yow, or what semeth yow by oure conseilours that we han chosen in oure present nede."

"My lord," quod she, "I biseke yow in al humblesse that ye wol nat wilfully replie agayn my resouns, ne distempre youre herte, thogh I speke thyng that yow displese, for God woot that as in myn entente I speke it for youre beste, for youre honour, and for youre profite eke; and soothly I hope that youre benyngnytee wol taken it in pacience. Trusteth me wel," quod she, "that youre conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly be called a conseillyng, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye, [2430] in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wise.

"First and forward ye han erred in thassemblynge of youre conseilours; for ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to youre conseil, and after ye myghte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede; but certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to youre conseil a greet multitude of peple ful chargeant and ful anoyous for to heere. Also, ye han erred, for there as ye sholden oonly have cleped to youre conseil youre trewe frendes olde and wise, [2435] ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres and enemys reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence withouten love. And eek also ye have erred for ye han broght with yow to youre conseil ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse; the whiche thre thinges been con-

2430. *thassemblynge*, H *the*
gaderyng.

2430. *and after . . . mo folk*,
om. H¹.
chargeant, burdensome.

trariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable, the whiche thre ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in youre self ne in youre conseilours, as yow oghte. Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to youre conseilours youre talent and youre affeccioun to make werre anon, and for to do vengeance. [2440] They han espied by youre wordes to what thyng ye been enclyned, and therfore han they rather counselled yow to youre talent than to youre profit.

"Ye han erred also, for it semeth that it suffiseth to han been counselled by thise conseilours oonly, and with litel avys, where-as in so greet and so heigh a nede it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours and moore deliberacioun to parfourne youre emprise.

"Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examyned youre conseil in the forseyde manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. [2445] Ye han erred also, for ye han nat maked no divisioun bitwixe youre conseilours, this is to seyn, bitwixen youre trewe freendes and youre feyned conseilours; ne ye han nat knowe the wil of youre trewe freendes, olde and wise, but ye han cast alle hire wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned youre herte to the moore partie and to the gretter nombre, and there been ye condescended. And, sith ye woot wel that men shal alwey fynde a gretter nombre of fooles than of wise men, and therfore the conseils that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, there as men take moore reward to

2435. *anientissed*, annihilated.
talent, desire.

2445. *trewe*, om. H.
reward, regard.

the nombre than to the sapience of persones, [2450] ye se wel that in swiche conseillyngees fooles han the maistrie."

Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde, "I graunte wel that I have erred, but there as thou hast toold me heerbiforn that he nys nat to blame that chaungeth hise conseilours in certain caas, and for certeine juste causes, I am al redy to chaunge my conseilours right as thow wolt devyse. The proverbe seith, that for to do synne is mannyssh, but certes, for to persevere longe in synne is werk of the devel."

[2455] To this sentence answereth anon dame Prudence and seyde, "Examineth," quod she, "youre conseil and lat us see the whiche of hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow best conseil; and for as muche as that the examynacioun is necessarie, lat us bigynne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens that first speeken in this matiere. I sey yow that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyde yow in youre conseil discreetly as hem oughte, and in hir speche seyde ful wisely that to the office of hem aperteneth to doon to every wight honour and profit, and no wight for to anoye, [2460] and in hir craft to doon greet diligence unto the cure of hem whiche that they han in hir governaunce. And, sire, right as they han answered wisely and discreetly, right so rede I that they been heighly and sovereynly gerdoned for hir noble speche,

2450. *The proverbe seith*, S.
Chrysost., *Adhortatio*
ad Theod. lapsum i. 14:
"Humanum enim est

peccare, diabolicum vero
perseverare."

2450. *aperieneth*, H² *appendith*.

2460. *gerdoned*, rewarded.

and eek, for they sholde do the moore ententif bisynesse in the curacioun of youre doghter deere ; for, al be it so that they been youre freendes, therfore shal ye nat suffren that they serve yow for noght, [2465] but ye oghte the rather gerdone hem and shewe hem youre largesse.

"And as touchynge the proposicioun which that the phisiciens encreesceden in this caas ; this is to seyn, that in maladies that oon contrarie is warissshed by another contrarie ; I wolde fayn knowe hou ye understonde this text, and what is youre sentence."

"Certes," quod Melibeus, "I understonde it in this wise : [2470] that right as they han doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another ; for right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I venge me upon hem, and doon hem wrong, and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another."

"Lo, lo," quod dame Prudence, "how lightly is every man enclined to his owene desir and to his owene plesaunce ! Certes," quod she, "the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in thys wise, [2475] for certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeance to vengeance, ne wrong to wrong, but they been semblable ; and therfore, o vengeance is nat warissshed by another

2465. *encreesceden,* enlarged
on ; H *han shewed*
you.
warissshed, healed.

2465. *hou ye understonde this*
text, H thilke text and
how thay understonde
it.
sentence, H entente.

vengeaunce, ne o wroong by another wroong, but everich of hem encreesceth and aggreggeth oother.

"But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wise ; for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thynges ; [2480] but certes, wikkednesse shal be warissed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thynges ; and heer-to accordeth Seint Paul the Apostle in manye places.

"He seith, 'Ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche ; but do wel to hym that dooth thee harm, and blesse hym that seith to thee harm.' And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord.

[2485] "But now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was geven to yow by the men of lawe, and the wise folk, that seyden alle by oon accord, as ye han herd bifore, that over alle thynges ye sholde doon youre diligence to kepen youre persone and to warnestoore youre hous ; and seyden also, that in this caas yow oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun. And, sire, as to the firste point that toucheth to the kepyng of youre persone, [2490] ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal everemoore mekely and devoutly preyen, biforn alle thynges, that Jhesus Crist of his grete mercy wol han hym in his proteccioun and been his sovereyn helping at his

2475. *aggreggeth*, *aggravates*. 2485. *warnestoore*, *garrison*.

nede, for certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept sufficeantly withouten the keypyng of oure Lord Jhesu Crist.

"To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith, 'If God ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth.' [2495] Now, sire, thanne shul ye committe the keypyng of youre persone to youre trewe freendes that been approved and knowe, and of hem shul ye axen helpe, youre persone for to kepe, for Catoun seith, 'If thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy freendes, for ther nys noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe freend.'

"And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres, and have alwey in suspect hire compaignye, for Piers Alfonse seith, 'Ne taak no compaignye by the weye of straunge men, but if so be that thou have knowe hym of a lenger tyme. [2500] And if so be, that he be falle into thy compaignye, paraventure, withouten thyn assent, enquire thanne as subtilly as thou mayst of his conversacioun, and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy wey,—seye that thou goost thider as thou wolt nat go,—and if he bereth a spere, hoold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, hoold thee on his lift syde.' And after this thanne shul ye kepe yow wisely from all swich

2490. *in ydel waketh*, in vain
watches.

2495. *Catoun, De Moribus*, iv.
13:

"Auxilium a notis petito,
si forte laboras.

Nec quisquam melior
medicus quam fidus
amicus."

2495. *Piers Alfonse*, *Disc.*
Cler. xviii. 10.

2500. *goost*, *H wilt go*.

manere peple as I have seyde bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe.

“And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere [2505] that for any presumpcioun of youre strengthe, that ye ne dispise nat ne acounte nat the myght of youre adversarie so litel that ye lete the keypyng of youre persone for youre presumpcioun, for every wys man dredeth his enemy, and Salomon seith, ‘Weleful is he that of alle hath drede, for certes, he that thurgh the hardynesse of his herte and thurgh the hardynesse of hymself hath to greet presumpcioun, hym shal yvel bityde.’ Thanne shul ye everemoore countrewayte embusschementz and alle espiaille. [2510] For Senec seith, that the wise man that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes, ne he ne falleth into perils that perils escheweth. And, al be it so, that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in keypyng of thy persone; this is to seyn, ne be nat necligent to kepe thy persone, nat oonly for thy gretteste enemys, but for thy leeste enemy. [Senec seith, ‘A man that is wel avysed, he dredeth his leste enemye.’] [2515] Ovyde seith that the litel wesele wol slee the grete bole and the wilde hert. And the book seith, ‘A litel thorn may prikke a greet kyng ful soore, and an hound wol holde the wilde boor.’

2505. *lete*, forego.
countrewayte, etc., watch
 against ambushes.
 2510. *Senec seith*, Publilius
 Syrus, *Sent.* 542.
that dredeth, E he dred-
 eth.

2510. *escheweth harmes*, om.
 E³.
Senec seith, Publilius
 Syrus, *Sentent.* 255:
 om. E.
 2515. *Ovyde, De Rem. Am.*
 ii. 25, 26.

"But nathelees, I sey nat thou shalt be coward, that thou doute ther wher as is no drede. The book seith that somme folk han greet lust to deceyve, but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved. Yet shaltou drede to been empoisoned, and kepe yow from the compaignye of scorneres, [2520] for the book seith, 'With scorneres make no compaignye, but flee hire wordes as venym.'

"Now as to the seconde point ; where as youre wise conseilours conseilled yow to warnestoore youre hous with gret diligence, I wolde fayn knowe how that ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is youre sentence."

Melibeus answerde and seyde, "Certes, I understande it in this wise : That I shal warnestoore myn hous with toures, swiche as han castelles, and othere manere edifices, and armure and artelries, by whiche thynges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and deffenden, that myne enemys shul been in drede myn hous for to approche."

[2525] To this sentence answerde anon Prudence. "Warnestooryng," quod she, "of heighe toures and of grete edifices appertyneth somtyme to pryde and eek men make heihe toures with grete costages and with greet travaille, and whan that they been accompliced yet be they nat worth a stree, but if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde

2520. *conseilled*, H *warnede*.

kepen, H *kepen and edifi-*
fien.

2525. *appertyneth . . . toures*,
text from Corpus ; EH⁵
om.
stree, straw.

and wise. And understood wel that the gretteste and strongeste garnyson that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise goodes, is that he be biloved amonges hys subgetz and with hise neighebores; for thus seith Tullius, that ther is a manere garnysoun that no man may venquysse ne disconfite, and that is [2530] a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple.

"Now, sire, as to the thridde point, where as youre olde and wise conseilours seyden that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, but that yow oghte purveyen and apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun, trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wisely and right sooth, for Tullius seith, 'In every nede er thou bigynne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence.' [2535] Thanne seye I that in vengeance takyng, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestooryng, er thou bigynne, I rede that thou apparaille thee therto and do it with greet deliberacioun, for Tullius seith, 'The longe apparaillyng biforn the bataille maketh short victorie,' and Cassidorus seith, 'The garnyson is stronger whan it is longe tyme avysed.'

"But now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by youre neighebores, swiche as doon yow

2525. *and strongeste, H strength*

or.

Tullius, rather Seneca,
De Clementia, i. 19. 5 :

"Unum est inexpugnabile munimentum, amor civium."

2530. *apparailen*, prepare.

Tullius, *De Offic.* i. 21.
73.

2535. *Cassidorus*, *Variarum*,
Lib. i. Ep. 17.

reverence withouten love, [2540] youre olde enemys reconsiled, youre flatereres, that conseilled yow certeyne thynges prively, and openly conseilleden yow the contrarie, the yonge folk also, that conseilleden yow to venge yow, and make werre anon. And certes, sire, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich manere folk to youre conseil, which conseillours been ynogh reprieved by the resouns aforeseyd.

[2545] "But nathelees, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes, the trouthe of this matiere, or of this conseil, nedeth nat diligently enquire, for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileynye, and how manye trespassours and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and all this vileynye. And after this thanne shul ye examyne the seconde condicioun which that the same Tullius addeth in this matiere; [2550] for Tullius put a thyng which that he clepeth consentynge, this is to seyn, who been they, and how manye and whiche been they, that consenten to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to youre adversaries. And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is

2545. *the special, H the purpos special.*

Tullius, cp. De Offic. ii. 5. 18.

2545. *after this thanne, H after that.*

that the same, om. H.

2550. *and whiche been they, om. EH.*

wel knowen whiche folk been they that consenteden to youre hastif wilfulnessse, for trewely, alle tho that conselleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat youre freendes.

[2555] "Lat us now considere whiche been they that ye holde so greetly youre freendes as to youre persone ; for al be it so that ye be myghty and riche, certes, ye ne been nat but allone, for certes, ye ne han no child but a doghter, ne ye ne han bretheren, ne cosyns germayns, ne noon oother neigh kynrede, wherfore that youre enemys for drede sholde stinte to plede with yow, or to destroye youre persone. [2560] Ye knowen also that youre richesces mooten been dispended in diverse parties, and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth ; but thyne enemys been thre, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosyns, and oother ny kynrede, and though so were that thou haddest slayn of hem two or thre, yet dwellen ther ynowe to wreken hir deeth, and to sle thy persone. And though so be that youre kynrede be moore siker and stedefast than the kyn of youre adversarie, [2565] yet nathelees, youre kynrede nys but a fer kynrede, they been but litel syb to yow, and the kyn of youre enemys been ny syb to hem, and certes, as in that hir condicioun is bet than youre.

2550. *hastif* (*wilfulnessse*), H
first.

2555. *ye ne been nat but*, H *ye
been.*

2560. *dispended*, H *departed*,
Pet. *dall.*

though so were, H *though
so be.*

2565. *syb*, related.

"Thanne lat us considere also of the conseillyng of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, whether it accorde to resoun. And certes, ye knowe wel, nay; for as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight but the juge that hath the jurisdiccoun of it, [2570] whan it is graunted hym to take thilke vengeance hastily or attemprely as the lawe requireth. And yet mooreover of thilke word that Tullius clepeth 'consentyng,' thou shalt considere if thy myght and thy power may consenten and suffise to thy wilfulnesse, and to thy conseilours. And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that nay; for sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no thyng, but oonly swich thyng as we may doon rightfully, [2575] and certes, rightfully ne mowe ye take no vengeance, as of youre propre auctoritee.

"Thanne mowe ye seen that youre power ne consenteth nat, ne accordeth nat, with youre wilfulnesse.

"Lat us now examyne the thridde point, that Tullius clepeth 'consequent.' Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposest for to take is the consequent, and therof folweth another vengeance, peril and werre, and othere damages with-outen nombre, of whiche we be nat war, as at this tyme. [2580] And as touchynge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth 'engendrynge,' thou shalt considere that this wrong which that is doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys, and of the vengeance takynge

2575. *propre*, H *owne*.

upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastynge of riches, as I seyde.

"Now, sire, as to the point that Tullius clepeth 'causes,' which that is the laste point. Thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeine causes, [2585] whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*, this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. The fer cause is Almyghty God, that is cause of alle thynges; the neer cause is thy thre enemys. The cause accidental was hate, the cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. [2590] The cause formal is the manere of hir werkyng that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy wyndowes; the cause final was for to sle thy doghter. It letted nat in as muche as in hem was.

"But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne kan I nat deme but by coniectynge and by supposynge. For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende by-cause that the book of decrees seith, 'Seelden, or with greet peyne, been causes broght to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne.'

[2595] "Now, sire, if men wolde axe me why that God suffred men to do yow this vileynye, certes, I kan nat wel answer, as for no soothfastnesse, for thapostle

2585. *clepen*, H *calte*.

2590. *the book of decrees*:

Decret. Gratiani, P. ii.

Causa i. Qu. i. C. 25.

2590. *baddely*, H *evyl*.

2595. *this vileynye*, H² *this wrong and vilenye*.

seith that the sciences and the juggementz of oure Lord God Almyghty been ful depe,—ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly. Nathelees, by certeyne presumpciouns and coniectynges, I holde and bileeve, that God, which that is ful of justice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by juste cause, resonable.

[2600] “Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, ‘a man that drynketh hony.’ Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of sweete temporeel riches, and delices and honours of this world, that thou art drunken, and hast forgotten Jhesu Crist, thy creatour; thou ne hast nat doon to hym swich honour and reverence as thee oughte, ne thou ne hast nat wel ytaken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith, [2605] ‘Under the hony of the goodes of the body is hyd the venym that sleeth the soule;’ and Salomon seith, ‘If thou hast founden hony, ete of it that suffiseth, for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe, and be nedy and poure;’ and peraventure, Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eeris of misericorde, and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punysshed in the manere that thow hast y-trepassed. [2610] Thou hast doon synne agayn oure Lord Crist, for certes, the thre enemys of mankynde,—that is to seyn, the flesh, the feend and the world,—thou hast suffred hem entre into thyn herte wilfully by the wyndowes of thy body, and hast nat defended

2600. *Thy name is Melibee,*
this, etc., H om. is
and this.

2600. *Ovide, Amor. i. viii. 104:*
“Impia sub dulci melle
venena latent.”

thy self suffisantly agayns hire assautes, and hire temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in five places ; this is to seyn, the deedly synnes that been entred into thyn herte by thy five wittes. [2615] And in the same manere oure Lord Crist hath wold and suffred that thy thre enemys been entred into thyn hous by the wyndowes, and han y-wounded thy doghter in the foreseyde manere."

"Certes," quod Melibee, "I se wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys, shewynge me the perils and the yveles that myghten falle of this vengeance ; but whoso wolde considere in alle vengeancees the perils and yveles that myghte sewe of vengeance takynge, [2620] a man wolde nevere take vengeance ; and that were harm, for by the vengeance takynge been the wikked men dissevered fro the goode men, and they that han wyl to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos whan they seen the punyssynge and chastisyng of the trespass-ours."

[And to this answered dame Prudence, "Certes," said she, "I grant you that from vengeance come many evils and many benefits, and yet vengeance belongeth not to a lay person but only to the judges, and to those who have jurisdiction over evil-doers.]

2615. *the wyndowes*, H *tho* for *the*.

sewe, H *folwe*.

2620. *dissevered*, H *destroyed* and *dissevered*.

to do wikkednesse, H om. *do*.

2620. *And to this answered*,

etc. : the words in brackets are inserted from the French ; they are not given in any of the seven MSS.

[2625] "And yet seye I moore, that right as a singular persone synneth in takynge vengeance of another man, right so synneth the juge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han disserved; for Senec seith thus: That maister, he seith, is good that proveth shrewes. And, as Cassidore seith, 'A man dredeth to do outrages whan he woot and knoweth that it displeseth to the juges and sovereyns.' Another seith, 'The juge that dredeth to do right maketh men shrewes,' [2630] and Seint Paule the Apostle seith in his Epistle, whan he writeth unto the Romainys, that 'The juges beren nat the spere withouten cause, but they beren it to punysse the shrewes and mysdoeres, and to defende the goode men.' If ye wol thanne take vengeance of youre enemys, ye shul retourne, or have youre recours to the juge that hath the jurisdiccion upon hem, and he shal punysse hem as the lawe axeth and requireth."

"A!" quod Melibee, "this vengeance liketh me no thyng. [2635] I bithenke me now, and take heede how Fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me to passe many a stroong paas. Now wol I assayen hire, trowynge with Goddes helpe that she shal helpe me my shame for to venge."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "if ye wol werke by my

2625. *singular*, H *sengle*.
proveth, H⁴ *reproveth*.
Cassidore, *Variar.* i. 4.
Another seith, *Publil.*
Syrus, *Sentent.* 528.
do, H *demen*.

2625. *maketh men shrewes*, H³
om. men.
 2635. *stroong paas*, H *strayt*
passage.
assayen hire, *trowynge*,
H aske her that.

conseil ye shul nat asseye Fortune by no wey, ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hire after the word of Senec, for thynges that been folily doon and that been in hope of Fortune shullen nevere come to goode ende. [2640] And, as the same Senec seith, 'The moore cleer and the moore shynyng that Fortune is, the moore brotil and the sonner broken she is; trusteth nat in hire, for she nys nat stidefaste, en stable, for whan thow trowest to be moost seur and siker of hire helpe, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee.' And where as ye seyn that Fortune hath norissed yow fro youre childhede, I seye, that in so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hire and in hir wit; [2645] for Senec seith, 'What man that is norissed by Fortune she maketh hym a greet fool.' Now thanne, syn ye desire and axe vengeance, and the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and bifore the juge ne liketh yow nat, and the vengeance that is doon in hope of Fortune is perilous and uncertein, thanne have ye noon oother remedie, but for to have youre recours unto the sovereyn juge that vengeth alle vileynyes and wronges, and he shal venge yow after that hym self witnesseth, where as he seith, [2650] 'Leveth the vengeance to me, and I shal do it.'

2635. *Senec*, Publil. Syrus, *Sent.* 320.

2640. *broken she is*, H^a *breketh sche*: for the quotation see Publil. Syrus, *Sent.* 189: "Fortuna vitrea est et, cum splendet, frangitur."

2640. *trowest*, H^a *wenest or trowest*.

2645. *Senec*, Publil. Syrus, *Sent.* 173.

2650. *I shal do it*, H *yelde* for *do*.

Melibee answerde, "If I ne venge me nat of the vileynye that men han doon to me, I sompne or warne hem that han doon to me that vileynye, and alle othere, to do me another vileynye, for it is writen, 'If thou take no vengeance of an oold vileynye, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee a newe vileynye.' And also for my suffrance men wolden do to me so muchel vileynye that I myghte neither bere it ne susteene, [2655] and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe, for men seyn, 'In muchel suffrynge shul manye thynges falle unto thee whiche thou shalt nat mowe suffre.'"

"Certes," quod Prudence, "I graunte yow that over muchel suffraunce nys nat good, but yet ne folweth it nat ther-of that every persone to whom men doon vileynye take of it vengeance, for that aperteneth and longeth al oonly to the juges, for they shul venge the vileynyes and injuries; [2660] and therfore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyde above been oonly understonden in the juges, for whan they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileynyes to be doon withouten punysshynge, they sompne nat a man al oonly for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it. Also a wys man seith that the juche that correcteth nat the synnere comandeth and biddeth hym do synne; and the juges and sovereyns myghten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and mysdoeres, [2665]

2655. *and holden*, om. H.

2660. *a wys man*, Cæc. Balbus,

De Nugis Phil.: "Qui non corripit peccantem peccare imperat."

that they sholden, by swich suffrance, by proces of tyme wexen of swich power and myght that they sholden putte out the juges and the sovereyns from hir places, and atte laste maken hem lesen hire lordshipes.

"But lat us now putte that ye have leve to venge yow. I seye ye been nat of myght and power as now to venge yow, for if ye wole maken comparisoun unto the myght of youre adversaries, ye shul fynde in manye thynges that I have shewed yow er this that hire condicioun is bettre than youre; [2670] and therfore seye I that it is good as now that ye suffre and be patient.

"Forthermoore, ye knowen wel that after the comune sawe, it is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a strenger, or a moore myghty man than he is hymself; and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as stronge a man as he, it is peril; and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie; and therfore sholde a man flee stryvynge as muchel as he myghte; [2675] for Salomon seith, 'It is a greet worshipe to a man to kepen hym fro noyse and stryf.' And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter myght and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, studie and bisye thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee, for Senec seith, that 'He putteth hym in greet peril that stryveth

2665. *maken hem lesen*, H² *do hem lese*.

2670. *woodnesse*, madness. The

"common saw" is from Seneca, *De Ira*, ii. 34. 1.

2675. *Senec*, Publilius Syrus, *Sent.* 483.

with a gretter man than he is hymself;’ and Catoun seith, ‘If a man of hyer estaat or degree, or moore myghty than thou, do thee anoy or grevaunce, suffre hym, [2680] for he that oones hath greved thee, another tyme may releeve thee and helpe.’

“Yet sette I caas ye have bothe myght and licence for to venge yow, I seye that ther be ful manye thynges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance takynge, and make yow for to enclyne to suffre and for to han pacience in the thynges that han been doon to yow. First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in youre owene persone, [2685] for whiche defautes God hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyde yow heer biforn; for the poete seith, that we oghte paciently taken the tribulacions that comen to us whan we thynken and consideren that we han disserved to have hem; and Seint Gregorie seith, that whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his synnes, the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse unto hym; and in as muche as hym thynketh hise synnes moore hevy and grevous, [2690] in so muche semeth his payne the lighter, and the esier unto hym.

“Also ye owen to enclyne and bowe youre herte to take the pacience of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, as seith Seint Peter in hise Epistles: ‘Jhesu Crist,’ he

2675. *Catoun, De Moribus*, iv. 39.
2680. *greved thee*, H *don the a*
grievance.

2680. *the thynges*, H⁶ *the*
wronges.

seith, 'hath suffred for us and geven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe hym, for he dide nevere synne, ne nevere cam ther a vileynous word out of his mouth; whan men cursed hym he cursed hem noght, and whan men betten hym he manaced hem noght.' [2695] Also the grete pacience which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred withouten hir desert or gilt oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. Forthermoore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, considerynge that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel while endure, and soone passed been and goone, and the joye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable after that; the Apostle seith in his Epistle, [2700] 'The joye of God,' he seith, 'is perdurable,' that is to seyn, everelastyng.

"Also trowe and bileveth stedefastly that he nys nat wel y-norissed, ne wel y-taught, that kan nat have pacience, or wol nat receyve pacience; for Salomon seith that the doctrine and the wit of a man is knowen by pacience. And in another place he seith that he that is pacient governeth hym by greet prudence. And the same Salomon seith, 'The angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempreth hem and stilleth.' [2705] He seith also, 'It is moore worth to be pacient, than for to be right strong,' and he that may have the lordshipe of

2690. *vileynous*, H⁴ *vileyns*.

2695. *han y-suffred*, H *have had and suffred*.

2700. *is pacient*, H *hath pacience*.

atempreth hem, H⁵ *him for hem*.

his owene herte is moore to preyse than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees ; and therfore seith Seint Jame in his Epistle, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun."

"Certes," quod Melibee, "I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun, but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken, [2710] ne I nam nat of the nombre of right parfite men, for myn herte may nevere been in pees unto the tyme it be venged ; and al be it so that it was greet peril to myne enemys to do me a vileynye in takynge vengeance upon me, yet tooken they noon heede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wikked wyl, and hir corage ; and therfore, me thynketh, men oghten nat repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, [2715] and though I do a greet excesse, that is to seyn, that I venge oon outrage by another."

"A !" quod dame Prudence, "ye seyn youre wyl and as yow liketh, but in no caas of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage, ne excesse, for to vengen hym, for Cassidore seith that as yvele dooth he that vengeth hym by outrage as he that dooth the outrage ; and therfore, ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn, by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage. [2720] And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of youre adversaries in oother manere than right comandeth, ye synnen, and ther-

2710. *wikked wyl*, H *wikked desir*.

2715. *Cassidore*, *Variar.* i. 20.

fore seith Senec, that a man shal nevere vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse. And if ye seye that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fightyng by fightyng, certes, ye seye sooth, whan the defense is doon anon withouten intervalle or withouten taryng or delay, for to deffenden hym and nat for to vengen hym. [2725] And it bihoveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his deffense that men have no cause ne matiere to repreven hym that deffendeth hym of excesse and outrage, for ellis were it agayn resoun. *Pardee* ye knowen wel that ye maken no deffense as now for to deffende yow, but for to venge yow, and so sheweth it that ye han no wyl to do youre dede attemprely, and therefore me thynketh that pacience is good, for Salomon seith that he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm."

[2730] "Certes," quod Melibee, "I graunte yow that whan a man is inpacient and wrooth, of that that toucheth hym noght and that aperteneth nat unto hym, though it harme hym, it is no wonder, for the lawe seith that he is coupable that entremetteth or medleth with swych thyng as aperteneth nat unto hym. And Salomon seith, that he that entremetteth hym of the noyse or strif of another man is lyk to hym that taketh an hound by the eris; for right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eris is outhere while biten with the hound, right in the same wise is

2720. *Senec*, the pseudo-Seneca,
De Moribus, 139.

2725. *for ellis were it agayn
 resoun*, om. H⁴.

2725. *sheweth*, H *semelh*.

dede, H *wille*.

2730. *entremetteth*, *interferes*.

it resoun that he have harm that by his inpacience medleth hym of the noyse of another man whereas it aperteneth nat unto hym. [2735] But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disese, toucheth me right ny, and therfore, though I be wrooth and inpacient, it is no merveille; and, savyng your grace, I kan nat seen that it myghte greetly harme me though I tooke vengeance, for I am richer and moore myghty than myne enemys been. And wel knowen ye that by moneye and by havynge grete possessions been alle the thynges of this world governed; [2740] and Salomon seith, that alle thynges obeyen to moneye."

Whan Prudence hadde herd hir housbonde avanten hym of his riches and of his moneye, dispreysynge the power of hise adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wise: "Certes, deere sire, I graunte yow that ye been riche and myghty, and that the riches been goode to hem that han wel y-geten hem and wel konne usen hem; for, right as the body of a man may nat lyven withoute the soule, namoore may it lyve withouten temporeel goodes; [2745] and for riches may a man gete hym grete freendes. And therfore seith Pamphilus, 'If a netherdes doghter,' seith he, 'be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men

2735. *and inpacient*, om. H.

2740. *the riches been*, H
richesse is.

may nat lyven, H *may*
not be.

may it, H *may a man.*

2745. *freendes*, H *frendschipe.*
Pamphilus, Pamphilus,
De Amore:

"Dummodo sit dives cujus-
dam nata bubulci
Eligit e mille, quem libet,
ipsa virum."

which she wol take to her housebonde,' for of a thousand men oon wol nat forsaken hire ne refusen hire. And this Pamphilles seith also, 'If thow be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt fynde a greet nombre of felawes and freendes; and if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewel freendshipe and felaweshipe, [2750] for thou shalt be al alloone withouten any compaignye, but if it be the compaignye of povre folk.' And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover, that they that been thralle and bonde of lynage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the riches; and right so as by riches ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverté come ther manye harmes and yveles, for greet poverté constreyneth a man to do manye yveles, and therfore clepeth Cassidore poverté the mooder of ruyne,— [2755] that is to seyn, the mooder of overthrowng or fallynge doun. And therfore seith Piers Alfonce, 'Oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is whan a free man by kynde or by burthe is constreyned by poverté to eten the almesse of his enemy;' and the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bookes; he seith that sorweful and myshappy is the condicioun of a povre beggere, for if he axe nat his mete he dyeth

2745. *which . . . housebonde*,
om. E⁴.

and felaweshipe, om. H.

2750. *Cassidore, Variar.* ix.
13: "mater criminum
necessitas."

2755. *Piers Alfonce, Discip.*
Cler. iv. 5.

Innocent [III.], *De Con-*
temptu Mundi, i. 14;
the passage versified by
Chaucer in the Pro-
logue to the Man of
Law's Tale.

for hunger, [2760] and if he axe, he dyeth for shame, and algates necessitee constreyneth hym to axe. And therfore seith Salomon that bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverté. And as the same Salomon seith, 'Bettre it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to lyven in swich wise.' By thise resons that I have seid unto yow, and by manye othere resons that I koude seye, I graunte yow that richesches been goode to hem that geten hem wel and to hem that wel usen tho richesches. [2765] And therfore wol I shewe yow hou ye shul have yow, and how ye shul bere yow in gaderynge of richesches, and in what manere ye shul usen hem.

"First, ye shul geten hem withouten greet desir, by good leyser, sokyngly, and nat over hastily; for a man that is to desiryng to gete richesches abaundoneth hym first to thefte, and to alle other yveles; and therfore seith Salomon, 'He that hasteth hym to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent.' He seith also, that the richesche that hastily cometh to a man soone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; [2770] but that richesche that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey

2760. *manye othere resons that I koude, H many another reson that I knowe and couthe. wel usen tho richesches, H hem wel usen.*

2765. *wol I shewe yow, etc.* The substance of the next seventy paragraphs is not given by Albertanus Brixiensis in his *Liber Con-*

solationis, but he refers to a section of his own work *De Amore Dei et Proximi*, whence the French translator, whom Chaucer follows, doubtless took them.

2765. *hou ye shul have yow, and, om. H. gaderynge, H gelyng. sokyngly, suckingly, gently.*

and multiplieth. And, sire, ye shul geten riches-
ses by youre wit and by youre travaille unto youre profit,
and that withouten wrong or harm doyng to any
oother persone, for the lawe seith that ther maketh no
man himselven riche if he do harm to another wight :
this is to seyn, that nature deffendeth and forbedeth
by right that no man make hymself riche unto the
harm of another persone. [2775] And Tullius seith
that no sorwe, ne no drede of deeth, ne no thyng that
may falle unto a man, is so muchel agayns nature as
a man to encressen his owene profit to the harm of
another man. And though the grete men and the
myghty men geten riches moore lightly than thou,
yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit, for
thou shalt in alle wise flee ydelnesse ; for Salomon
seith that ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yves.
[2780] And the same Salomon seith that he that trav-
aileth and bisieth hym to tilien his land shal eten
breed, but he that is ydel and casteth hym to no bisy-
nesse ne occupacioun shal falle into poverté, and dye
for hunger. And he that is ydel and slow kan nevere
fynde covenable tyme for to doon his profit ; for ther
is a versifiour seith that the ydel man excuseth hym
in wynter by cause of the grete coold, and in somer
by enchesoun of the heete. For these causes seith
Caton, 'Waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel
for to slepe, for over muchel reste norisseth and

2770. *deffendeth*, prohibits.2775. *myghty*, H *riche*.2780. *covenable* [convenient],
H *him*.*enchesoun*, occasion.

causeth manye vices.' [2785] And therfore seith Seint Jerome, 'Dooth somme goode deedes, that the devel, which is oure enemy, ne fynde yow nat unocupied, for the devel ne taketh nat lightly unto his werkynge swiche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes.'

"Thanne thus in getynge richesces ye mosten flee ydelnesse; and afterward ye shul use the richesces whiche ye have gotten by youre wit and by youre travaille, in swich a manere that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparynge, ne to fool large,—that is to seyn, over large a spendere; [2790] for right as men blamen an avaricious man by cause of his scarsetee and chyngerie, in the same wise is he to blame that spendeth over largely. And therfore seith Caton, 'Use,' he seith, 'thy richesces that thou hast gotten in swich a manere that men have no matiere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chynche; for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs.' [2795] He seith also, 'The goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure, that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, whan they han namoore propre of hir owene they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man.'

"I seye thanne that ye shul fleen avarice, usynge youre richesces in swich manere that men seye nat that youre richesces been y-buried, [2800] but that ye have hem in youre myght and in youre weeldynge; for a wys man prepreveth the avaricious man and seith

2785. *goode deedes*, E *goodes*.

2790. *chyngerie*, stinginess.

thus in two vers: 'Wherto and why burieth a man his goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye, for deeth is the ende of every man, as in this present lyf; and for what cause or enchesoun joyneth he hym or knytteth he hym so faste unto his goodes [2805] that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren hym or departen hym from his goodes; and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed he shal no thyng bere with hym out of this world?' And therfore seith Seint Augustyn, that the avaricious man is likned unto helle, that the moore it swelweth the moore desir it hath to swelwe and devoure. And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chynche, [2810] as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wise that men calle yow nat fool-large. Therfore seith Tullius, 'The goodes,' he seith, 'of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hyd, ne kept so cloos but that they myghte been opened by pitee and debonairetee,'—that is to seyn, to geven part to hem that han greet nede,—'ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene to been every mannes goodes.'

"Afterward, in getyng of youre richesces and in usynge hem, ye shul alwey have thre thynges in youre herte, [2815] that is to seyn, oure Lord God, conscience, and good name. First, ye shul have God in youre herte, and for no richesce ye shullen do no thyng

2805. *swelweth*, swalloweth.
desir it hath, H² *it de-*
sireth.

2815. *ye shullen do . . . manere*,
H ye shul in no manere
doo no thing which might.

which may in any manere displese God, that is youre creatour and makere ; for after the word of Salomon, 'It is bettre to have a litel good with the love of God, than to have muchel good and tresour and lese the love of his Lord God.' [2820] And the prophete seith that bettre it is to been a good man and have litel good and tresour, than to been holden a shrewe, and have grete riches. And yet seye I ferthermoore, that ye sholde alwey doon youre bisynesse to gete yow riches, so that ye gete hem with good conscience, and thapostle seith that ther nys thyng in this world of which we sholden have so greet joye as whan oure conscience bereth us good witesse ; [2825] and the wise man seith, 'The substance of a man is ful good whan synne is nat in mannes conscience.'

"Afterward, in getyng of youre riches and in usynge of hem, yow moste have greet bisynesse and greet diligence that youre goode name be alwey kept and conserved, for Salomon seith that bettre it is and moore it availleth a man to have a good name than for to have grete riches. And therfore he seith in another place, 'Do greet diligence,' seith Salomon, 'in keypyng of thy freend and of thy goode name, [2830] for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious.' And certes, he sholde nat be called a gentil man that after God and good conscience, alle thynges left, ne dooth his diligence and bisynesse to kepen his good name. And Cassidore

2825. *mannes*, H² *his*.2830. *called*, H⁴ *cleped*.

seith that it is signe of gentil herte whan a man loveth and desireth to han a good name. And therfore seith Seint Augustyn, that ther been two thynges that arn necessarie and nedefulle, and that is, good conscience and good loos; [2835] that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owene persone inward, and good loos for thy neighebore outward. And he that trusteth hym so muchel in his goode conscience that he displeseth and setteth at noght his goode name or loos, and rekketh noght though he kepe nat his goode name, nys but a crueel cherl.

“Sire, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getyng riches, and how ye shullen usen hem, and I se wel that for the trust that ye han in youre riches ye wole moeve werre and bataille. [2840] I conseilte yow that ye bigynne no werre in trust of youre riches, for they ne suffisen noght werres to mayntene. And therfore seith a philosophre, ‘That man that desireth and wole algates han werre shal nevere have suffisaunce, for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make if he wole have worshipe and victorie.’ And Salomon seith that the gretter riches that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath. And, deere sire, al be it so that for youre riches ye mowe have muchel folk, [2845] yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good to bigynne werre where as ye mowe in oother manere have pees unto youre worshipe and profit. For the victories of batailles that been in this world lyen nat

2830. *signe of*, H adds *a good man and a gentil or of a*.

2830. *loos*, praise.

2835. *displeseth*, H² *despiseth*.

in greet nombre or multitude of the peple, ne in the vertu of man, but it lith in the wyl and in the hand of oure Lord God Almyghty.

"And therfore Judas Machabeus, which was Goddes knyght, whan he sholde fighte agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre and a gretter multitude of folk and strenger than was this peple of Machabee, [2850] yet he reconforted his litel compaignye, and seyde right in this wise: 'Als lightly,' quod he, 'may oure Lord God Almyghty geve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk, for the victorie of a bataile comth nat by the grete nombre of peple, but it come from oure Lord God of hevene.'

"And, deere sire, for as muchel as ther is no man certein if he be worthy that God geve hym victorie [no more than he is sure whether he is worthy of the love of God] or naught. After that Salomon seith, [2855] 'Therfore every man sholde greetly drede werres to bigynne;' and by cause that in batailles fallen manye perils, and happeth outhere while that as soone is the grete man slayn as the litel man; and as it is writen in the Seconde book of Kynges, 'The dedes of batailles been aventurouse and no thyng certeyne, for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another;' [2860] and for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschue werre, in as muchel as a man

2845. *greet nombre*, H⁸ *gretter*
for *greet*.

bracketed are supplied
from the French.

2850. *compaignye*, H *poepie*.

[no more, etc.], the words

2855. *manye perils*, H *many*
mervayles and periles.

may goodly, for Salomon seith, 'He that loveth peril
shal falle in peril.'

After that dame Prudence hadde spoken in this
manere, Melibee answerde and seyde, "I see wel,
dame Prudence, that by youre faire wordes, and by
yours resouns that ye han shewed me, that the werre
liketh yow no thyng, but I have nat yet herd youre
conseil how I shal do in this nede."

[2865] "Certes," quod she, "I conseilte yow that
ye accorde with youre adversaries and that ye have
pees with hem; for Seint Jame seith, in hise Epistles,
that by concord and pees the smale riches wexen
grete, and by debaat and discord the grete riches
fallen down; and ye knowen wel that oon of the
gretteste and moost sovereyn thyng that is in this
world is unytee and pees. And therfore seyde
oure Lord Jhesu Crist to hise Apostles in this wise,
[2870] 'Wel happy and blessed been they that loven
and purchacen pees, for they been called children of
God.'"

"A!" quod Melibee, "now se I wel that ye loven
nat myn honour ne my worshiþe. Ye knowen wel
that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and
bryge by hire outrage, and ye se wel that they ne
requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken
nat to be reconsiled. Wol ye thanne that I go and
meke me and obeye me to hem and crie hem mercy?"

2860. *dame Prudence* (2), H
om. *Prudence*.

2870. *bryge*, quarrel.
and obeye me to hem, om.
H.

[2875] For sothe that were nat my worshiþe ; for right as men seyn that over greet hoomlynesse engendreth dispreisyng, so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse."

Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, "Certes, sire, sauf youre grace, I love youre honour and youre profit as I do myn owene, and evere have doon ; ne ye, ne noon oother, syen nevere the contraire ! [2880] And yit if I hadde seyð that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconsiliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mystaken me, ne seyð amys, for the wise man seith, 'The dissensioun bigynneth by another man and the reconsilyng bygynneth by thy self ;' and the prophete seith, 'Flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse, seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is.' Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to youre adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow ; [2885] for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted that ye wol do no thyng for me ; and Salomon seith, 'He that hath over hard an herte atte laste he shal myshappe and mystyde.'"

Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wise : "Dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displedes of thynges that I seye, for ye knowe wel that I am angry

2875. *hoomlynesse*, Pet.² *humbl-
lesse* ; H *þryde*.
ne ye . . . *contraire*, H
ye ne *nowe noon other*
seyn.

2880. *shrewednesse*, H *schame
and schrewednesse*.

2885. *hath over hard an herte*,
H *is over hard-herted*.
herd, H² *seyn*.

and wrooth, and that is no wonder, [2890] and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they don ne what they seyn; therfore the prophete seith that troubled eyen han no cleer sighte. But seyeth and conseileth me as yow liketh, for I am redy to do right as ye wol desire, and if ye repreve me of my folye I am the moore holden to love yow and preyse yow, for Salomon seith that he that repreveth hym that dooth folye [2895] he shal fynde gretter grace than he that deceyveth hym by sweete wordes."

Thanne seide dame Prudence, "I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for youre grete profit, for Salomon seith, 'He is moore worth that repreveth or chideth a fool for his folye, shewynge hym semblant of wratthe, than he that supporteth hym and preyseth hym in his mysdoynge, and laugheth at his folye.' And this same Salomon seith afterward that by the sorweful visage of a man, that is to seyn, by the sory and hevy contenance of a man, [2900] the fool correcteth and amendeth hymself."

Thanne seyde Melibee, "I shal nat konne answeere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen; seyeth shortly youre wyl and youre conseil, and I am al redy to fulfille and parfourne it."

Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wyl to hym, and seyde, "I conseille yow," quod she, "aboven alle thynges, that ye make pees bitwene God and yow, [2905] and beth reconsiled unto hym and to his grace; for as I have seyde yow heer biforn, God

2900. *hir wyl, H hire counsail and hire wille.*

hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for youre synnes, and if ye do as I sey yow, God wol sende youre adversaries unto yow and maken hem fallen at youre feet redy to do youre wyl and youre comandementz; for Salomon seith, 'Whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likynge to God, [2910] he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries and constreyneth hem to biseken hym of pees and of grace.' And I prey yow, lat me speke with youre adversaries in privee place, for they shul nat knowe that it be of youre wyl or youre assent, and thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hire entente, I may conseilte yow the moore seurely."

"Dame," quod Melibee, "dooth youre wil and youre likynge, [2915] for I putte me hoolly in youre disposicioun and ordinaunce."

Thanne dame Prudence, whan she saugh the goode wyl of hir housbonde, delibered and took avys in herself, thinkinge how she myghte brynge this nede unto a good conclusioun and to a good ende. And whan she saugh hir tyme she sente for thise adversaries to come unto hire into a pryvee place, and shewed wisely unto hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, [2920] and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre, and seyde to hem in a goodly manere hou that hem oughten have greet repentaunce of the injurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee, hir lord, and to hire, and to hire doghter.

And whan they herden the goodliche wordes

2910. *that it be of, H it by.*

of dame Prudence, they weren so supprised and ravysshed, and hadden so greet joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. [2925] "A! lady," quod they, "ye han shewed unto us the blessynge of swetnesse after the sawe of David the prophete, for the reconsilynge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humylitee, ye, of youre grete goodnesse, have presented unto us. Now se we wel that the science and the konnynge of Salomon is ful trewe, [2930] for he seith that sweete wordes multiplien and encreesen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meeke.

"Certes," quod they, "we putten oure dede and al oure matere and cause al hoolly in youre goode wyl, and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. And therfore, deere and benygne lady, we preien yow and biseke yow as mekely as we konne and mowen, that it lyke unto youre grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede youre goodliche wordes, [2935] for we consideren and knowelichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure, so ferforth that we be nat of power to maken hise amendes, and therfore we oblige and bynden us and oure freendes to doon al his wyl and hise comandementz. But peraventure he hath swich hevynesse and swich wratthe to usward by cause of oure offense, that he wole enjoyne us swich a payne as we mowe nat bere ne susteene,

2925. *and the konnynge*, om. H.

[2940] and therefore, noble lady, we biseke to youre wommanly pitee to taken swich avysement in this nede that we ne oure freendes be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh oure folye."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "it is an hard thyng and right perilous that a man putte hym al outrely in the arbitracioun and juggement, and in the myght and power of hise enemys, for Salomon seith, 'Leeveth me, and geveth credence to that I shal seyn; I seye,' quod he, 'ye peple, folk and governours of hooly chirche, [2945] to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy broother, ne geve thou nevere myght ne maistrie of thy body whil thou lyvest.'

"Now sithen he deffendeth that man shal nat geven to his broother, ne to his freend, the myght of his body, by strenger resoun he deffendeth and forbedeth a man to geven hymself to his enemy. And nathelees I conseilte you that ye mystruste nat my lord, [2950] for I woot wel and knowe verrailly that he is debonaire and meeke, large, curteys, and no thyng desirous, ne coveitous of good ne richesse; for ther nys nothyng in this world that he desireth save oonly worshippe and honour. Forthermoore I knowe wel and am right seur that he shal no thyng doon in this nede withouten my conseil, and I shal so werken in this cause that, by grace of oure Lord God, ye shul been reconciled unto us."

[2955] Thanne seyden they with o voys, "Worship-

2945. *deffendeth*, forbids. 2945. *hymself*, H *his body*.

2945. *And*, H *But*.

ful lady, we putten us and oure goodes al fully in youre wil and disposicioun, and been redy to comen what day that it like unto youre noblesse to lymte us or assigne us, for to maken oure obligacioun and boond as strong as it liketh unto youre goodnesse, that we mowe fulfille the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee."

Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of thise men, she bad hem goon agayn prively, [2960] and she retourned to hir lord Melibee, and tolde hym how she foond hise adversaries ful repentant, knowelechyng ful lowely hir synnes and trespas, and how they were redy to suffren all payne, requiryng and preying hym of mercy and pitee.

Thanne seyde Melibee, "He is wel worthy to have pardoun and forgifnesse of his synne that excuseth nat his synne, but knowelecheth it and repenteth hym, axinge indulgence. [2965] For Senec seith, 'Ther is the remissioun and forgifnesse, where as confessioun is, for confessioun is neighebore to innocence,' and he saith in another place that he that hath shame of his synne, and knowelecheth it, is worthi remyscioun; and therfore I assente and conforme me to have pees; but it is good that we do it nat with-outen the assent and wyl of oure freendes."

Thanne was Prudence right glad and joyeful, and seyde, [2970] "Certes, sire," quod she, "ye han wel

2955. *it like*, H add *yow and*.

2965. *Senec*, the pseudo-Seneca, *De Moribus*, 94.

and he saith . . . re-

myssioun, text from Petworth and Lansdowne (the latter reading *mercy* for *remyscioun*); other MSS. omit wholly or in part.

and goodly answered; for right as by the conseil, assent and helpe of youre freendes, ye han been stired to venge yow and maken werre, right so withouten hire conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with youre adversaries; for the lawe seith, 'Ther nys no thyng so good by wey of kynde as a thyng to been unbounde by hym that it was y-bounde.'"

And thanne dame Prudence, withouten delay or tariyng, sente anon hire messages for hire kyn and for hire olde freendes, whiche that were trewe and wyse, [2975] and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this mateere as it is aboven expressed and declared, and preyden that they wolde geven hire avys and conseil what best were to doon in this nede. And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hire avys and deliberacioun of the forseide mateere, and hadden examyned it by greet bisynesse and greet diligence, they gave ful conseil for to have pees and reste, [2980] and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries to forgifnesse and mercy.

And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes accorde with hire wille and hire entencioun, she was wonderly glad in hire herte, and seyde, "Ther is an old proverbe," quod she, "seith that the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it, [2985] and abide nat, ne delaye it nat til to morwe. And therfore I conseilte that ye sende youre messages, swiche as been discrete and

2975. *nede*, H² *matiere*.2980. *quod she*, om. H.2980. *do it*, om. H.

wise, unto youre adversaries, tellynge hem on youre bihalve, that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, [2990] that they shape hem, withouten delay or taryng, to comen unto us." Which thyng parfourned was in dede; and whanne thise trespassours and repentyng folk of hire folies,—that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee,—hadden herd what thise messagers seyden unto hem, they weren right glad and joyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, yeldyng graces and thankynges to hir lord Melibee and to al his compaignye, [2995] and shopen hem withouten delay to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comendement of hir lord Melibee.

And right anon they tooken hire wey to the court of Melibee, and tooken with hem somme of hire trewe freendes to maken feith for hem and for to been hire borwes, and whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem thise wordes: "It standeth thus," quod Melibee, "and sooth it is, that ye, [3000] causelees and withouten skile and resoun, han doon grete injuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also; for ye han entred in to myn hous by violence, and have doon swich outrage that alle men knowen wel that ye have disserved the deeth, and therefore wol I knowe and wite of yow [3005] wheither ye wol putte the punyssement and the chastisyng and the vengeance of this outrage in the wyl of me and of my wyf Prudence, or ye wol nat?"

2995. *borwes*, sureties.3005. *Prudence*, H³ *Dame Prudence*.

Thanne the wiseste of hem thre answerde for hem alle, and seyde, "Sire," quod he, "we knowen wel that we been unworthy to comen unto the court of so greet a lord, and so worthy as ye been, for we han so greetly mystaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wise agayn youre heigh lordshipe that trewely we han disserved the deeth; [3010] but yet for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee that al the world witnesseth in youre persone, we submytten us to the excellence and benigneitee of youre gracious lordshipe, and been redy to obeie to alle youre comandementz, bisekyng yow that of youre merciable pitee ye wol considere oure grete repentaunce and lough submyssioun, and graunten us forgesnesse of oure outrageous trespas and offense; [3015] for wel we knowe that youre liberal grace and mercy strecchen hem ferther into goodnesse than doon oure outrageous giltes and trespas into wikkednesse; al be it that cursedly and dampnably we han agilt agayn youre heigh lordshipe."

Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and receyved hire obligaciouns and hir boondes by hire othes upon hire plegges and borwes, and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne unto his court, [3020] for to accepte and receyve the sentence and juggement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes aforeseyd; whiche thynges ordeyned, every man retourned to his hous.

And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme,

3005. *agilt*, H² *gilted*.

she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries.

To which Melibee answerde and seyde, "Certes," quod he, "I thynke and purpose me fully [3025] to desherite hem of al that evere they han, and for to putte hem in exil for evere."

"Certes," quod dame Prudence, "this were a crueel sentence and muchel agayn resoun; for ye been riche ynough and han no nede of oother mennes good, and ye myghte lightly in this wise gete yow a coveitous name, which is a vicious thyng and oghte been eschued of every good man; [3030] for after the sawe of the word of the Apostle, 'Coveitise is roote of alle harmes.' And therfore it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of youre owene than for to taken of hir good in this manere; for bettre it is to lesen with worshiþe, than it is to wyne with vileynye and shame; and everi man oghte to doon his diligence and his bisynesse to geten hym a good name. And yet shal he nat oonly bisie hym in keypyng of his good name, [3035] but he shal also enforcen hym alwey to do som thyng by which he may renouvelle his good name; for it is writen 'that the olde good loos and good name of a man is soone goon and passed whan it is nat newed ne renovelled.'

3020. *freyned*, prayed.

3025. *evere*, H³ *evermore*.

in this wise, om. H⁴.

good man, H⁴ om. *good*.

3030. *of the word*, om. H³.

wynne, H⁴ add *good*;
Corp.³ add *worschiþe*.

3035. *loos*, praise.

and good name, om. H.

"And as touchynge that ye seyn ye wole exile youre adversaries, that thynketh me muchel agayn resoun, and out of mesure, considered the power that they han geve yow upon himself. [3040] And it is writen that he is worthy to lesen his privilege that mysuseth the myght and the power that is geven hym. And I sette cas, ye myghte enjoyne hem that peyne by right and by lawe, which I trowe ye mowe nat do. I seye ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun peraventure, and thanne were it likly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn; [3045] and therfore if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste deemen moore curteisly, this is to seyn, ye moste geven moore esy sentences and juggementz. For it is writen that he that moost curteisly comandeth, to hym men moost obeyen. And therfore I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede ye caste yow to overcome youre herte. For Senec seith that he that overcometh his herte overcometh twies; [3050] and Tullius seith, 'Ther is no thyng so comendable in a greet lord as whan he is debonaire and meeke, and appeseth lightly.' And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance in swich a manere, that youre goode name may be kept and conserved, and that men mowe have cause and mateere to preyse yow of pitee and of mercy, [3055] and that ye have no cause to repente yow of thyng that ye doon; for

3035. *hemself*, H *here body*.3045. *deemen*, judge.*Senec seith*, Publil. Syrus,
Sent. 64: "Bis vincit

qui se in victoria vincit."

3050. *Tullius*, *De Offic.* i. 25.
88.

Senec seith, 'He overcometh in an yvel manere that repenteth hym of his victorie.' Wherefore, I pray yow, lat mercy been in youre mynde and in youre herte, to theffect and entente that God Almyghty have mercy on yow in his laste juggement; for Seint Jame seith in his Epistle, 'Juggement withouten mercy shal be doon to hym that hath no mercy of another wight!'"

[3060] Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudence, and hire wise informaciouns and techynges, his herte gan enclyne to the wil of his wyf, considerynge hir trewe entente, and conformed hym anon and assented fully to werken after hir conseil, and thonked God, of whom procedeth al vertu and alle goodnesse, that hym sente a wyf of so greet discrecioun.

And whan the day cam that hise adversaries sholde appieren in his presence, [3065] he spak unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in this wyse: "Al be it so that of youre pride and presumpcioun and folie, and of youre negligence and unkonnyng, ye have mysborn yow and trespassed unto me; yet, for as muche as I see and biholde youre grete humylitee, [3070] and that ye been sory and repentant of youre giltes, it constreyneth me to doon yow grace and mercy. Therefore I receyve

3055. *Senec seith*, Publil. Syrus, *Sent.* 366.

in youre mynde and, om.
H⁶.

mercy, H *mercy and pite.*

3060. *conseil*, H *reed and coun-*
seil.

al vertu and, om. H⁵.

3065. *presumpcioun*, H *heigh*
presumpcion.
grete, H. om.

yow to my grace and forgeve yow outrely alle the offenses, injuries and wronges that ye have doon agayn me and myne, to this effect and to this ende, that God of his endelees mercy wole at the tyme of oure diyngge forgiven us oure giltes that we han trespassed to hym in this wrecched world ; [3075] for doutelees if we be sory and repentant of the synnes and giltes whiche we han trespassed in the sighte of oure Lord God, he is so free and so merciable that he wole forgiven us oure giltes, and bryngen us to his blisse that nevere hath ende." *Amen.*

The murye wordes of the Hoost to the Monk

Whan ended was my tale of Melibee,
 And of Prudence and hire benignytee, 3080
 Oure Hosté seyde, "As I am feithful man,
 And by that precious corpus Madrian,
 I haddé levere than a barel ale
 That goodé lief, my wyf, hadde herd this tale !
 For she nys no thyng of swich pacience 3085
As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
 By Goddés bonés ! whan I bete my knaves,
 She bryngeth me forth the greté clobbéd staves
And crieth, 'Slee the doggés everichoon,
And brek hem, bothé bak and every boon !' 3090

3082. *corpus Madrian*, the body of S. Mathurin, which would not accept burial except in France, and then worked miracles.

3090. *brek hem*, etc., so E and Heng. ; H² *brek of hem bothe bak and bone* ; rest om. of *hem*.

“And if that any neighebore of myne
Wol nat in chirchē to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hire to trespace,
Whan she comth home she rampeth in my face,
And crieth, ‘Falsē coward ! wreke thy wyf !’ 3095
By corpus bonēs ! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spynne !’
Fro day to nyght, right thus she wol bigynne,—
‘Allas !’ she seith, ‘that evere I was shape
To wedden a milksope or a coward ape, 3100
That wol been overlad with every wight !
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyvēs right !’

“This is my lif, but if that I wol fighte ;
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but if that I 3105
Be lik a wildē leoun, fool-hardy.
I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebore, and thannē go my way ;
For I am perilous with knyf in honde ;
Al be it that I dar hire nat withstonde, 3110
For she is byg in armēs, by my feith,
That shal he fynde that hire mysdooth or seith.
But lat us passe away fro this mateere.

“My lord the Monk,” quod he, “be myrie of
cheere,
For ye shul telle a talē trewely. 3115
Lóo, Rouchestre stant heer fastē by !
Ryde forth, myn owenē lord, brek nat oure game,

3101. *overlad*, overborne.3108. *go my way*, H² *renne away*.

But by my trouthe I knowé nat youre name,—
 Wher shal I callé you, my lord daun John,
 Or daun Thomás, or ellés daun Albon? 3120
 Of what hous be ye, by youre fader kyn?
 I vowe to God, thou hast a ful fair skyn!
~~It is a gentil pasture ther thow goost;~~
~~Thou art nat lyk a penant, or a goost.~~
 Upon my feith, thou art som officer, 3125
 Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,
 For by my fader soule, as to my doom
Thou art a maister, whan thou art at hoom;
 No pouré cloysterer, ne no novys,
 Bút a governour, wily and wys, 3130
 And therwith-al of brawnés and of bones,
A wel-farynge personé, for the nones.
 I pray to God, geve hym confusioun
 That first thee broghte unto religioun.
 Thou woldest han been a tredéfowel aright; 3135
 Haddestow as greet a leeve as thou hast myght
 To parfourne al thy lust in engendrure,
 Thou haddest bigeten ful many a créature.
 Allas! why werestow so wyd a cope?
 God geve me sorwe! but and I were a pope, 3140
 Nat oonly thou, but every myghty man,
 Though he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,
 Sholde have a wyf,—for al the world is lorn;

3118. *knowe*, H *can*.3119. *Wher*, whether.
daun, dominus.3125. *som*, H *an*.3137. *lust*, H *wil*.3138. *ful*, om. H⁶.3140. *but*, om. H⁴.
a, om. Petw.3142. *ful hye*, H² *brode*, Camb.³
hye.

Religioun hath take up al the corn
 Of tredyng, and we borel men been shrympes ; 3145
 Of fieble trees ther comen wrecched ympes.
 This maketh that oure heirès beth so sklendre
 And feble that they may nat wel engendre ;
 This maketh that oure wyvès wole assaye
 Religious folk, for ye mowe bettre paye 3150
 Of Venus paiementz than mowè we.
 God woot, no Lusshèburghes payen ye !
 But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye,
 Ful ofte, 'in game a sooth,' I have herd seye !"

This worthy Monk took al in pacience 3155
 And seyde, "I wol doon al my diligence,
 As fer as sowneth into honestee,
 To tellè yow a tale, or two, or three ;
 And if yow list to herkne hyderward,
 I wol yow seyn the lyf of Seint Edward, 3160
Or ellis, first, tragédies wol I telle,
Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.

"Tragédie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As oldé bookés maken us memórie,
Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee,
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly ;

3145. borel, common.

3146. wrecched, H² feble, Petw.
 symple.

ympes, saplings.

3150. ye, H⁴ thay.

3152. Lusshburghes, base coins
 imported from Luxem-
 burg.

3153. lord, for that, H² lorde
 though, Heng.⁴ lord
 though that.

3160. yow, om. E.

3161. telle, H² yow telle.

3165. hym, H⁴ hem.

*Fall from
 height*

And they ben versified communely

exametre Of six feet, which men clepen exametron.

In prose eek been endited many oon, 3170

And eek in meetre in many a sondry wyse ;

Lo, this declaryng oghte ynogh suffise.

Now herkneth, if yow liketh for to heere ;

But first, I yow biseeke in this mateere,

Though I by ordre tellé nat thise thynges 3175

Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,

After hir agés as men writen fynde,

But tellen hem, som bifore and som bihynde,

As it now comth unto my remembraunce,

Have me excuséd of min ignoraunce." 3180

MONK'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth The Monkes Tale, de Casibus Virorum
Illustrium*

I wol biwaille, in manere of tragédie,

The harm of hem that stooode in heigh degree,

And fillen so that ther nas no remédie

To brynge hem out of hir adversitee ;

For-certain, whan that Fortune list to flee, 3185

3171. *And eek in meetre, H^a
In metre eek.*

3178. *tellen, H^b telle.
De Casibus Virorum Il-
lustrium, the title indi-
cates Chaucer's obliga-
tions to Boccaccio's De*

Cas. Vir. et Feminarum Illust.,
from which and the same
author's *De Claris Mulieribus*,
Boethius, *De Consolatione*, the
Roman de la Rose, and the
Bible the monk takes his "old
ensamples."

Ther may no man the cours of hire withholde.
 Lat no man truste on blynd prosperitee ;
 Be war by thise ensamplés trewe and olde.

At LUCIFER,—though he an angel were,
 And nat a man,—at hym wol I bigynne, 3190
For though Fortuné may noon angel dere,
From heigh degree yet fel he for his synne
Doun into hellé, where he yet is inne.
 O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
 Now artow Sathanas that mayst nat twynne 3195
 Out of miserie in which that thou art falle.

Loo ADAM, in the feeld of Damysse,
 With Goddés owné fynger wrought was he,
 And nat bigeten of mannés sperme unclene,
And welte all paradys sayynge o tree. 3200
Hadde nevere worldly man so heigh degree
As Adam, til he for mysgövernance
Was dryven out of hys hys prosperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

Loo SAMPSON, which that was annunciat 3205
 By angel, longe er his nativitee,

3188. *by, E² of.*

3189. *Lucifer,* Chaucer's addition ; Boccaccio begins with Adam.

3191. *dere,* harm.

3195. *twynne,* depart.

3197. *Damysse,* Damascus ; Boccaccio's "Ager, qui postea Damascenus."

3200. *welte,* ruled.

3201. *so heigh,* H *suche.*

3203. *hys,* om. H.

3205. *annunciat,* from Boccaccio "Prænunciante per angelum Deo," but Chaucer takes his points mainly from the Bible.

And was to God Almyghty consecrat,
And stood in noblesse whil he myghte see.
Was nevere swich another as was hee,
To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardynesse ;
But to hise wyvès toolde he his secree, 3211
Thurgh whiche he slow hymself for wrecchednesse.

Sampson, this noble almyghty champioun,
Withouten wepene save his handés tweye,
He slow and al to-renté the leoun, 3215
Toward his weddyng walkynge by the weye.
His falsé wyf koude hym so plese and preye
Til she his conseil knew ; and she, untrewe,
Unto hise foos his conseil gan biwrewe,
And hym forsook, and took another newe. 3220

Thre hundred foxes took Sampson for ire,
And alle hir taylès he togydré bond,
And sette the foxes taylès alle on fire,
For he on every tayl had knyt a brond ;
And they brende alle the cornés in that lond, 3225
And alle hire olyveres, and vynés eke.
A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,
And hadde no wepene but an asses cheke.

Whan they were slayn so thursted hym that he
Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to preye 3230
That God wolde on his peyne han som pitee,
And sende hym drynke, or ellés moste he deye

And of this asses cheké, that was dreye,
 Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,
 Of which he drank ynow, shortly to seye ; 3235
 Thus heelpe hym God, as *Judicum* can telle.

By verray force at Gazan, on a nyght,
 Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
 The gates of the toun he hath up-plyght,
 And on his bak y-caryed hem hath hee 3240
 Hye on an hillé, that men myghte hem see.
 O noble, almyghty Sampson, lief and deere,
 Had thou nat toold to wommen thy secree,
 In all this world ne haddé been thy peere !

This Sampson nevere ciser drank, ne wyn, 3245
 Ne on his heed cam rasour noon, ne sheere,
 By precept of the messenger divyn ;
 For alle hise strengthés in hise heerés weere ;
 And fully twenty wynter, yeer by yeere,
 He hadde of Israel the governaunce ; 3250
 But sooné shal he wepé many a teere,
 For wommen shal hym bryngen to meschaunce.

Unto his lemman Dalida he tolde
~~That in hise heeris at his strengthé lay,~~
~~And falsly to hise foomen she hym solde ;~~ 3255
~~And slepyng in hir barm upon a day~~
~~She made to clippe or shere hise heres away,~~

3234. *wang-tooth*, cheek-tooth. 3236. *Judicum*, Book of Judges.
 3245. *ciser*, cider.

And made hise foomen al his craft espyen ;
 And whan that they hym foond in this array,
 They bounde hym faste and putten out hise eyen.

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave, 3261
 Ther was no boond with which men myghte him
 bynde ;

But now is he in prison in a cave,
 Where as they made hym at the queerne grynde.

O noble Sampson, strongest of mankynde ! 3265
 O whilom juge, in glorie and in richesse !
 Now maystow wepen with thyne eyen blynde,
 Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.

The ende of this caytyf was as I shal seye ;
 Hise foomen made a feeste upon a day, 3270
 And made hym as a fool biforn hem pleye ;
 And this was in a temple of greet array ;
 But atté laste he made a foul affray ;
 For he the pilers shook and made hem falle,
 And doun fil temple and al, and ther it lay ; 3275
 And slow hymself, and eek his foomen alle :

This is to seyn, the prynces everichoon ;
And eek thre thousand bodyes were ther slayn
With fallynge of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now wol I na moore sayn ; 3280

3260. *putten out*, H *put out*
bothe.

3264. *queerne*, hand-mill.

3274. *the pilers*, H³ *two pilers*,
 Corp.³ *two postes*.

Beth war by this ensample oold and playn
That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves
Of swich thyng as they wolde han secree fayn,
If that it touche hir lymés or hir lyvés.

Of HERCULES, the sovereyn conquerour, 3285
 Syngen hise werkés, laude, and heigh renoun ;
For, in his tyme, of strengthe he was the flour.
 He slow, and rafte the skyn of the leoun ;
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun ;
 He Arpies slow, the crueel bryddes felle ; 3290
He golden apples refte of the dragoun ;
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle ;

He slow the crueel tyrant Busirus,
 And made his hors to frete hym, flessch and boon ;
 He slow the firy serpent venymus ; 3295
 Of Acheloys two hornés he brak oon ;
 And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon ;
 He slow the geant Anthëus the stronge ;
 He slow the grisly boor, and that anon ;
 And bar the hevene on his nekké longe. 3300

3285. *Hercules*, in this and the next stanza Chaucer follows closely Boethius, *De Consolatione*, Bk. v. Met. 7, keeping some of the phrases of his own translation.

3287. *was*, H⁴ *bar*.

3293. *Busirus*, Busiris, King of Egypt, who offered strangers in sacrifice.

3294. *frete*, eat.

3295. *firy*, H⁴ *verray*.

3296. *Acheloys*, the river-god turned himself into a bull to fight Hercules the better.

two hornes, E *hornes two*.

brak, H *raft*.

3297. *Cacus*, who stole the cattle of Hercules.

3298. *Anthëus*, Antæus.

Was nevere wight sith that this world bigan,
 That slow so manye monstres as dide he ;
 Thurghout this wyde world his namé ran,
 What for his strengthe and for his heigh bountee,
 And every reawmé wente he for to see. 3305
 He was so stroong that no man myghte hym lette ;
 At bothe the worldés endés, seith Trophee,
 In stide of boundés he a pileer sette.

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,
 That highté Dianira, fressh as May ; 3310
 And as thise clerkés maken mentioun,
 She hath hym sent a sherté, fressh and gay.
 Allas, this sherte—allas, and weylaway !—
 Evenymed was so subtilly withalle,
 That er that he had wered it half a day, 3315
 It made his flessch al from hise bonés falle ;

But nathélees somme clerkés hire excusen
By oon that highté Nessus, that it maked.
Be as he may, I wol hire noght accusen ;
 But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked, 3320
'Til that his flessch was for the venym blaked ;
And whan he saugh noon oother remedye,
In hooté coles he hath hymselfen raked ;
For with no venym deigned hym to dye.

3307. *Trophee*, E and Heng.,
 wiser than any modern
 commentator, append
 the note "Ille vates

Chaldeorum Tropheus"!

3318. *Nessus*, the Centaur
 whom Hercules slew.

Thus starf this worthy, myghty Hercules. 3325
 Lo! who may truste on Fortune any throwe?
For hym that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that kan hymselfen knowe!
 Beth war, for whan that Fortune list to glose, 3330
 Thanne wayteth she her man to overthrowe
 By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

The myghty trone, the precious tresor,
 The glorious ceptre, and roial magestee
That hadde the kyng NABUGODONOSOR, 3335
With tonge unnethé may discryved bee.
He twyes wan Jerusalem the citee;
 The vessel of the temple he with hym ladde.
 At Babylaigné was his sovereyn see,
 In which his glorie and his delit he hadde. 3340

The faireste children of the blood roial
 Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
 And makéd ech of hem to been his thral.
 Amongès othere Daniel was oon,
 That was the wiseste child of everychon, 3345
 For he the dremès of the kyng expowned,
 Where as in Chaldeye clerk ne was ther noon,
 That wistè to what fyn hise dremès sowned.

This proude kyng leet maken a statue of gold,
 Sixty cubitès long and sevene in brede, 3350

3330. *glose*, flatter.3348. *sowned*, tended.3342. *leet*, H⁴ *dede*.3349. *maken*, H⁶ *make*.

To which ymagé, bothé yonge and oold
 Comanded he to loute, and have in drede,
 Or in a fourneys, ful of flambés rede,
 He shal be brent that woldé noght obeye;
 But nevere wolde assenté to that dede 3355
 Daniel, ne hise yongé felawes tweye.

This kyng of kyngés proud was and elaat;
~~He wende that God that sit in magestee~~
~~Ne myghte hym nat bireve of his estaat;~~
~~But sodeynly he loste his dignytée~~ 3360
~~And lyk a beest hym semed for to bee;~~
~~And eet hey as an oxe, and lay theroute~~
~~In reyn; with wildé beestés walkéd hee~~
~~Til certein tymé was y-come aboute;~~

And lik an eglés fetheres wex his heres; 3365
 Hise naylés lik a briddés clawés weere;
 Til God relesséd hym a certeyn yeres,
 And gaf hym wit, and thanne with many a teere
 He thanked God, and evere his lyf in feere
 Was he to doon amys, or moore trespacé; 3370
 And, til that tyme he leyde was on his beere,
 He knew that God was ful of myght and grace.

His soné, which that highté BALTHASAR,
 That heeld the regne after his fader day,

3351. *To, E The.*
bothe, E³ he bothe, omit-
ting he in next line.

3352. *loute* (bow), H *love*.

3360. *losté, H left.*

3365. *wex, emend. Skeat for wax*
(E) and were (H³) etc.
of MSS.

3366. *nayles, H hondes.*

He by his fader koudé noght be war ; 3375
 For proud he was of herte and of array,
 And eek an ydolastré he was ay.
His hye estaat assured hym in pryde ;
But Fortune caste hyme down and ther he lay,
And sodeynly his regné gan divide. 3380

A feeste he made unto hise lordés alle,
 Upon a tyme, and bad hem blithé bee ;
 And thanne hise officerés gan he calle,—
 “Gooth, bryngeth forth the vessels,” tho quod he,
 “Whiche that my fader in his prosperitee 3385
 Out of the temple of Jerusalem birafte,
 And to our hye goddés thanké we
 Of honour that oure eldrés with us lafte.”

Hys wyf, hise lordés, and hise concubynes
 Ay dronken, whil hire appetitès laste, 3390
 Out of this noble vessels sondry wyne ;
 And on a wal this kyng hise eyen caste,
 And saugh an hand, armlees, that wroot ful fast ;
 For feere of which he quook, and sikéd soore.
 This hand, that Balthasar so soore agaste, 3395
 Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na moore.

In al that land magicien was noon
 That koude expoundé what this lettré mente ;
 But Daniel expownéd it anon,
 And seyde, “King, God to thy fader sente 3400

3383. *officeres*, E⁴ *officers*.3390. *appetites*, H *arriont*.

Glorie and honour, regné, tresour, rente,
 And he was proud, and no-thing God ne dradde,
 And therfore God greet wreche upon hym sente,
 And hym birafte the regné that he hadde ;

“ He was out-cast of mannés compaignye ; 3405
 With asses was his habitacioun,
 And eet hey as a beest in weet and drye,
 Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,
 That God of hevene hath domynacioun
 Over every regne and every créature ; 3410
 And thanne hadde God of hym compassioun,
 And hym restored his regne and his figure.

“ Eek thou that art his sone art proud also,
 And knowest alle thise thyngés verrailly,
 And art rebel to God and art his foo ; 3415
 Thou drank eek of hise vessels boldély ;
 Thy wyf eek, and thy wenchés, synfully
 Dronke of the samé vessels sondry wynys,
 And heriest false goddés cursedly ;
 Therfore to thee y-shapen ful greet pyne ys. 3420

“ This hand was sent from God, that on the wal
 Wroot, ‘ *Mane, techel, phares*,’ trusté me,—
 Thy regne is doon, thou weyest nought at al,
 Dyvyded is thy regne, and it shal be

3403. *wreche*, vengeance.

3407. H botches the line as :

*And eet he hay in wet
 and eek in drye.*

3416. *boldely*, H *bodily*.

3419. *heriest*, praisest.

To Medès and to Persès geve," quod he. 3425
 And thilké samé nyght this kyng was slawe,
 And Darius occupieth his degree,
 Thogh he therto hadde neither right ne lawe.

Lordynges, ensample heer-by may ye take,
 How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse ; 3430
 For whan Fortúné wole a man forsake,
 She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
 And eek his freendès, bothé moore and lesse ;
 For what man that hath freendès thurgh Fortune
 Mishape wol maken hem enemys, as I gesse ; 3435
 This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commúne.

CENOBIA, of Palymerië queene, —
 As writen Persiens of hir noblesse, —
 So worthy was in armés, and so keene,
 That no wight passéd hire in hardynesse, 3440
 Ne in lynage, ne in oother gentillesse.
 Of kyngés blood of Perce is she descended ;
 I seyè nat that she hadde moost fairnesse,
 But of hire shape she myghte nat been amended.

From hire childhede I fyndé that she fledde 3445
 Office of wommen, and to wode she went,
 And many a wildé hertés blood she shedde
 With arwés brodé that she to hem sente ;

3437. *Cenobia*, the account of
 Zenobia follows closely,
 omitting details of
 battles, Boccaccio's *De*

Claris Mulieribus, Cap.
 98.

3437. *queene*, H⁴ *the queene*.

3441. *ne* (2), E² *nor*.

She was so swift that she anon hem hente,
 And whan that she was elder she wolde kille 3450
 Leouns, leopardes, and berès al to-rente,
 And in hir armès weelde hem at hir wille.

She dorsté wildé beestés dennés seke,
 And rennen in the montaignes al the nyght, 3454
 And slepen under the bussh ; and she koude eke
 Wrastlen, by verray force and verray myght,
 With any yong man, were he never so wight.
 Ther myghté no thyng in hir armès stonde.
 She kepte hir maydenhod from every wight ;
 To no man deigné hire for to be bonde ; 3460

But atté laste hir freendés han hire mariéd
 To Onédake, a prynce of that contree ; ~~and~~
 Al were it so that she hem longé tariéd-
 And ye shul understandé how that he
 Hadde swiché fantasies as haddé she ; 3465
 But nathéless, whan they were knyht infeere,
 They lyved in joye and in felicitee,
 For ech of hem hadde oother lief and deere,

Save o thyng, that she wolde nevere assente
By no wey that he sholdé by hire lye 3470
But onés, for it was hir pleyn entente
To have a child the world to multiplie ;

3455. *slepen under the, H⁴ slepe* 3462. *contree, H⁴ citee.*
under a.

3457. *wight, brave.* 3466. *infeere, together.*

And also soone as that she myghte espye
 That she was nat with childe with that dede, 3474
 Thanne wolde she suffre hym doon his fantasye
 Eft soone, and nat but oones, out of drede :

And if she were with childe at thilké cast,
 Na mooré sholde he pleyen thilké game,
 Til fully fourty dayés weren past ; 3479
 Thanne wolde she onés suffre hym do the same.
 Al were this Onédaké wilde or tame
 He gat na moore of hire, for thus she seyde,
 It was to wyvés lecherie and shame,
 In oother caas, if that men with hem pleyde.

Two sonés by this Onédake hadde she, 3485
 The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure ;
 But now unto our talé turné we.
 I seye so worshipful a creature,
 And wys ther-with, and largé with mesure,
 So penyble in the werre, and curteis eke, 3490
 Ne mooré labour myghte in werre endure
 Was noon, though al this world men sholdé seke.

Hir riche array ne myghté nat be told,
 As wel in vessel as in hire clothying.
 She was al clad in perree and in gold, 3495

3477-81. Chaucer here misunderstands his original.

3480. *ones*, om. H
do, H *to do*.

3486. *lettrure*, literature.

3487. *tale*, H *purpos*.

3489. *large*, liberal.

3492. H *Was nowher noon in al this world to seeke*.

3493. *ne myghte nat*, H *if it might*.

3495. *perree*, precious stones.

And eek she lafte noght, for noon huntyng,
 To have of sondry tonges ful knowyng,
 Whan that she leyser hadde ; and for to entende
 To lerne bookés was al hire likyng,
 How she in vertu myghte hir lyf dispende. 3500

And, shortly of this storie for to trete,
 So doghty was hir housbonde and eek she,
 That they conquéréd manye regnès grete
 In the Orient, with many a faire citee
 Apertenaunt unto the magestee 3505
 Of Romé, and with strong hond held hem faste,
 Ne nevere myghte hir foomen doon hem flee,
 Ay, whil that Onédakés dayés laste.

Hir batailles, whoso list hem for to rede,—
 Agayn Sapor the kyng and othere mo, 3510
 And how that al this proces fil in dede,
 Why she conquered, and what title had therto,
 And after of hir meschief and hire wo,
 How that she was bisegéd and y-take,—
 Lat hym unto my maister Petrak go, 3515
 That writ ynough of this, I undertake.

Whan Onédake was deed she myghtily
 The regnès heeld, and with hire propré hond

3496. *noon*, H *hir*.

3501. *storie*, E *proces*.

3506. *faste*, E² *ful faste*.

3511. *al*, om. H.

3515. *Petrak*, i.e. Boccaccio,
 who, however, is never
 mentioned by Chaucer,
 for what reason is not
 clear.

Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly
 That ther nas kyng, ne prynce, in al that lond 3520
 That he nas glad if he that gracè fond,
 That she ne wolde upon his lond werreye.
 With hire they maden alliance by bond
 To been in pees, and lete hire ride and pleye.

The emperour of Romé, Claudius, 3525
 Ne hym bifore, the Romain Galien,
 Ne dorstè nevere been so corageous
 Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,
 Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabyen, 3529
 Withinne the feelde that dorstè with hire fighte
 Lest that she wolde hem with hir handès slen,
 Or with hir meignee putten hem to flighte.

In kyngès habit wente hir sonés two,
 As heirès of hir fadrès regnès alle,
 And Hermanno and Thymalao 3535
 Hir namès were, as Persiens hem calle ;
 But ay Fortune hath in hire hony galle :
~~This myghty queené may no while endure.~~
~~Fortune out of hir rognè made hire falle~~
~~To wrecchednesse and to mysaventure.~~ 3540

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce
 Of Romé cam into hise handès tweye,
 He shoope upon this queene to doon vengeance ;

3519. *so cruelly, H ful trewely,* 3528. *noon (2), om. H.*
 Corp.^s trewely.
 3528. *Ermyn, Armenian.* 3543. *upon, H him of.*

And with hise legions he took his weye
 Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye, 3545
He made hire flee and attē last hire hente,
And fettred hire, and eek hire children tweye,
 And wan the land, and hoom to Rome he wente.

Amongēs othere thyngēs that he wan 3549
 Hir chaar, that was with gold wrought and perree,
 This gretē Romain, this Aurelian,
 Hath with hym lad, for that men sholde it see.
 Biforen his triūmphē walketh shee
 With giltē cheynēs on hire nekke hangyngē.
 Corónēd was she after hir degree, 3555
 And ful of perree chargēd hire clothynge.

allas, Fortunē! she that whilom was
~~Dredeful to kyngēs and to emperoures,~~
stares Now gaureth al the peple on hire, allas!
 And she that helmed was in starkē stoures, 3560
~~And wan by force townēs stronge, and toures,~~
Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
 Shal bere a distaf hire costēs for to quyte.

O noble, o worthy PETRO, glorie of Spayne 3565

3552. *it, om. H⁴.*

3556. *of perree charged, embroidered with precious stones.*

3559. *gaureth, stares.*

3560. *starkē stoures (Eshoures!), stiff battles.*

3562. *vitremyle, a woman's cap.*

3565. *Petro, Pedro the Cruel, killed by his brother Henry in 1369. In E, Heng. and Camb. this and the three other modern instances come at the end after Croesus, but wrongly as the Host's talk shows.*

Whom Fortune heeld so hye in magestee,
 Wel oghten men thy pitous deeth complayne !
 Out of thy land thy brother made thee flee,
 And after, at a seege, by subtiltee,
 Thou were bitraysed and lad unto his tente, 3570
 Where as he with his owene hand slow thee,
 Succedyng in thy regne and in thy rente.

The feeld of snow with thegle of blak therinne
 Caught with the lymerod coloured as the gleede,
 He brew this cursednesse and al this synne. 3575
 The "wikked-nest" was werker of this nede,
 Noght Charlès-Olyvver, that took ay heede
 Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
 Genylon-Olyver, corrupt for meede,
 Broghte this worthy kyng in swiche a brike. 3580

O worthy PETRO, kyng of Cipre also,
 That Alisandre wan by heigh maistrie,
 Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,

3568. H⁴ read *Thy bastard brother made the to fle.*

3572. *regne*, H *lond.*

3573. Dr. Furnivall, with some help from Prof. Skeat, has cleared up this stanza. Du Guesclin's arms were a black eagle on a silver shield, with a bend gules (the lymerod, or lime twig, coloured like a red coal). Wicked-nest is Sir Oliver de Manny (mal-ni) of Brit-

tany. The two trapped Pedro to the fatal meeting. The epithet Genylon refers to the Breton traitor who betrayed Roland. H has several bad readings in this verse.

3580. *brike*, trap.

3581. *Petro, kyng of Cipre*, Pierre de Lusignan, assassinated 1369.

3582. *Alisandre wan*, in 1365.

Of which thyne owenè ligès hadde envie,
 And for no thyng but for thy chivalrie 3585
 They in thy bed han slayn thee by the morwe.
~~Thus kan Fortúne hir wheel governe and gye,~~
~~And out of joyé bryngè men to sorwe.~~

Of Melan, gretè BARNABO VISCONTE,
 God of delit, and scourge of Lumbardye, 3590
 Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte,
 Sith in estaat thow cloumbè were so hye?
 Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
 For he thy nevew was, and sone-in-lawe,
 Withinne his prisoun madè thee to dye,— 3595
 But why, ne how, noot I that thou were slawe.

Of the erl HUGELYN OF PYZÈ the langour
 Ther may no tongè tellè for pitee ;
 But litel out of Pizé stant a tour,
 In whichè tour in prisoun put was he, 3600
 And with hym been hise litel children thre ;
 The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.
 Allas, Fortúne ! it was greet crueltee
 Swiche briddés for to putte in swiche a cage !

3589. *Barnabo*, Barnabo Visconti, deposed by his nephew, died in prison 1385.

3597. *Hugelyn of Pyse*, Ugolino of Pisa starved to death in 1289. See Dante, *Inferno*, xxxiii., from which Chaucer has borrowed.

3601. *thre*, Dante says four.

3602. *scarsly fyf yeer*, a touch added by Chaucer. All through it is interesting to compare his insistence on the pathos, with Dante's reticence.

Dampnéd was he to dyen in that prisoun, 3605
 For Roger, which that bisshope was of Pize,
 Hadde on hym maad a fals suggestioun
 Thurgh which the peplé gan upon hym rise
 And putten hym to prisoun in swich wise 3609
 As ye han herd, and mete and drynke he hadde
 So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffice,
 And therwithal it was ful poure and badde.

And on a day bifil that in that hour
 Whan that his meté wont was to be broght,
 The gayler shette the dorés of the tour. 3615
 He herde it wel, but he ne spak right noght,
 And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght
 That they for hunger woldé doon hym dyen.
 "Allas!" quod he, "allas, that I was wroght!"
 Therwith the teeris fillen from hise eyen. 3620

His yongé sone, that thre yeer was of age,
 Unto hym seyde, "Fader, why do ye wepe?
 Whanne wol the gayler bryngen oure potage;
 Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
 I am so hungry that I may nat slepe; 3625
 Now woldé God that I myghte slepen evere!
 Thanne sholde nat hunger in my wombé crepe;
 Ther is no thyng but breed that me were levere."

3605. *dyen*, H⁴ *deye*.3606. *Roger*, Ruggieri degli Ubaldini.3608. *upon hym rise*, H⁴ *on him arise*.3611. *wel*, om. E².3616. *ne*, added metri gratiâ by Dr. Morris. H⁵ spoils the line by reading *saugh* for *spak*.3628. *but*, H⁵ *save*.

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
 Til in his fadrès barm adoun it lay, 3630
 And seyde, "Farewel, fader, I moot dye!"
 And kiste his fader, and dyde the samè day;
 And whan the woful fader deed it say,
 For wo hise armès two he gan to byte,
 And seyde, "Allas, Fortúne! and weylaway! 3635
 Thy falsé wheel my wo al may I wyte!"

Hise children wende that it for hunger was
 That he hise armès gnow, and nat for wo,
 And seyde, "Fader, do nat so, alas!
 But rather ete the flessch upon us two; 3640
 Oure flessch thou gaf us, take oure flessch us fro,
 And ete ynogh,"—right thus they to hym seyde,
 And after that, withinne a day or two,
 They leyde hem in his lappe adoun and deyde.

Hymself, despeired, eek for hunger starf; 3645
 Thus ended is this myghty erl of Pize;
 From heigh estaat Fortúne away hym carf.
 Of this tragédie it oghte ynough suffise.
 Whoso wol here it in a lenger wise,
 Redeth the gretè poete of Ytaille 3650
 That hightè Dant, for he kan al devyse
 Fro point to point,—nat o word wol he faille.

3636. *wyte*, blame.3647. *away*, H⁴ *fro*.3647. *From heigh*, H *For his*.3651. *al*, H⁵ *it*.

Although that NERO were as vicious
 As any feend that lith in helle adoun,
 Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius, 3655
 This wyde world hadde in subjeccioun
 Bothe est and west, north and septemtrioun ;
 Of rubies, saphires, and of peerlés white,
 Were alle hise clothés brouded up and doun ;
 For he in gemmés greetly gan delite. 3660

Moore delicaat, moore pompous of array,
 Moore proud, was nevere emperour than he ;
 That ilkè clooth that he hadde wered o day,
 After that tyme he nolde it nevere see.
 Nettés of gold threed hadde he greet plentee 3665
 To fisse in Tybré, whan hym listè pleye.
 Hise lustés were al lawe in his decree,
 For Fortune, as his freend, hym wolde obeye.

He Romé brende for his delicacie ;
 The senatours he slow upon a day, 3670
 To heerè how men woldé wepe and crie ;
 And slow his brother, and by his suster lay.
 His mooder made he in pitous array,
 For he hire wombé slitté, to biholde
 Where he conceyvéd was, so, weilaway ! 3675
 That he so litel of his mooder tolde.

3654. *in helle*, H⁶ *ful lowe*.

3655. *Swetonius*, Chaucer is more indebted to the *Roman de la Rose* and to Boethius, *De Cons.* lib. 2, met. 6.

3657. *north*, Chaucer's slip for *south* ; Corp.⁸ om.

3663. *o*, H³ *a*.

3667. *lustes*, H *willes*.
al, H⁴ *as*.

3676. *tolde*, accounted.

No teere out of hise eyen for that sighte
 Ne cam, but seyde, "A fair womman was she!"
 Greet wonder is how that he koude or myghte
 Be domésman of hire dede beautee ; 3680
 The wyn to bryngen hym comanded he,
 And drank anon,—noon oother wo he made.
 Whan myght is joynéd unto crueltee,
 Allas, to depé wol the venym wade !

In yowthe a maister hadde this emperour, 3685
 To teché hym lettrure and curteisye,—
 For of moralitee he was the flour;
 As in his tymé, but if bookés lye ;
 And whil this maister hadde of hym maistrye,
 He makéd hym so konnyng and so sowple, 3690
 That longé tyme it was er tirannye,
 Or any vicé, dorste on hym uncowple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
 By-cause that Nero hadde of hym swich drede,
 For he fro vices wolde hym ay chastise 3695
 Discreetly, as by word, and nat by dede ;
 "Sire," wolde he seyn, "an emperour moot nede
 Be vertuous and haté tirannye ;"
 For which he in a bath made hym to blede
 On bothe hise armés, til he mosté dye. 3700

3680. *domesman*, critic ; this line is taken verbatim from Chaucer's version of Boethius.

3683. *joyned*, H *torned*.

3689. *this*, H⁴ *his*.

3694. *that*, om. H⁴.

3695. *ay*, om. H⁴.

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce
 In youthe agayns his maister for to ryse,
 Which afterward hym thoughte a greet grevaunce ;
 Therfore he made hym dyen in this wise ;
 But nathélees this Seneca the wise 3705
 Chees in a bath to dye in this manere
 Rather than han another tormentise ;
 And thus hath Nero slayn his maister deere.

Now fil it so that Fortune liste no lenger
 The hye pryde of Nero to cherice, 3710
 For though he werè strong yet was she strenger ;
 She thoughté thus : " By God, I am to nyce,
 To sette a man that is fulfild of vice
In heigh degree, and emperour hym calle.
By God ! out of his sete I wol hym trice ; 3715
Whan he leest weneth sonnest shal he falle ! "

The peplè roos upon hym on a nyght
 For his defaute, and whan he it espied,
 Out of hise dores anon he hath hym dight
 Allone, and, ther he wende han ben allied, 3720
 He knockèd faste, and ay the moore he cried
 The fastere shetté they the dorès alle ;
 Tho wiste he weel he hadde hymself mysgyed,
 And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.

3703. *a*, om. E.3707. *another*, E *any oother*.3711. *though*, E³ *though that*.
were, E² *was*.3712. *nyce*, foolish.3713. *fulfild*, H *ful sad*.3723. E and Heng. have the
 same line as in 3731 in
 place of this.

The peplé cride and rombled up and doun 3725
 That with his erys herde he how they seyde,
 "Where is this falsé tiraunt, this Neroun?"
 For fere almoost out of his wit he breyde,
 And to hise goddés pitously he preyde
 For socour, but it myghté nat bityde. 3730
 For drede of this, hym thoughté that he deyde,
 And ran into a garden hym to hyde;

And in this gardyn foond he cherlès tweye
 That seten by a fyr, greet and reed;
 And to thise cherlès two he gan to preye 3735
 To sleen hym, and to girden of his heed,
 That to his body, whan that he were deed,
 Were no despit y-doon for his defame.
 Hymself he slow, he koude no better reed,
Of which Fortúné lough, and hadde a game. 3740

Was nevere capitayn under a kyng
That regnés mo putte in subjeccioun,
Ne strengre was in feeld of allè thyng,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne moore pompous in heigh presumpcioun, 3745
Than OLOFERNE, which that Fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde hym up and doun,
Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

3728. *breyde*, started.3734. *That seten*, H *Sillyng*.
greet, H⁴ *ful greet*.3736. *girden*, strike.3740. *lough*, H *thai lough*,
 stupidly.3746. *Oloferne*, Holofernes.3748. *that he*, H *he it*.

Nat oonly that this world hadde hym in awe
 For lesynge of richesse or libertee, 3750
 But he made every man reneyen his lawe.
 "Nabugodonosor was god," seyde hee,
 "Noon oother god ne sholde adoured bee."
 Agayns his heestè no wight dorst trespase
 Save in Bethulia, a strong citee 3755
 Where Eliachim a preest was of that place.

But taak kepe of the deeth of Oloferne :
 Amydde his hoost he dronké lay a nyght,
 Withinne his tentè, large as is a berne,
 And yet, for al his pompe and al his myght, 3760
 Judith, a womman, as he lay upright.
 Slepynge, his heed of smoot, and from his tente
 Ful pryvèly she stal from every wight,
 And with his heed unto hir toun she wente.

What nedeth it of kyng ANTHIOCHUS 3765
 To telle his hyè roial magestee,
 His hyè pride, hise werkès venymus ?
 For swich another was ther noon as he.
 Redè which that he was in Machabee,
 And rede the proudè wordès that he seyde, 3770
 And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee,
 And in an hill how wrecchedly he deyde.

3749. *hym in*, H⁴ of *him*.3751. *reneyen* (H³ *reneye*), *deny*.3752. *Nabugodonosor*, Nebuchadnezzar.
god, H⁴ *lord*.3753. *adoured*, H⁴ *honoured*.3769, 70. *Rede*, H⁴ *Redeth*.*Machabee*, Bk. ii. chap. 9.

Fortune hym hadde enhauncéd so in pride
That verrailly he wende he myghte attayne
Unto the sterrés upon every syde ; 3775
And in balancé weyen ech montayne ;
And alle the floodés of the see restrayne ;
And Goddés peple hadde he moost in hate ;
Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,
Wenyngé that God ne myghte his pride abate. 3780

And for that Nichanore and Thymothee,
 Of Jewés weren venquysshed myghtily,
 Unto the Jewés swich an hate hadde he
 That he bad greithen his chaar ful hastily,
 And swoor, and seyde ful despitously 3785
 Unto Jerusalem he wolde eftsoone,
 To wreke his ire on it ful cruelly ;
 But of his purpos he was let ful soone.

God for his manace hym so sooré smoot
 With invisíble wounde, ay incuráble, 3790
 That in his guttés carf it so and boot,
 Thát hise peynés weren importable ;
 And certainly the wreche was resonable,
 For many a mannés guttes dide he payne ;
 But from his purpos curséd and dampnable 3795
 For all his smert he wolde hym nat restreyne ;

3782. *Of, H⁵ With.*3784. *greithen, prepare.*
*chaar, chariot.*3791. *boot, bit.*3792. *importable, unbearable.*3793. *wreche, vengeance.*

But bad anon apparaillen his hoost,—
 And, sodeynly, er he was of it war,
 God daunted al his pride and all his boost ;
 For he so sooré fil out of his char, 3800
 That it hise lemés and his skyn to-tar,
 So that he neyther myghté go ne ryde,
 But in a chayer men aboute hym bar
 Al for-brused, bothé bak and syde.

The wreche of God hym smoot so cruelly, 3805
 That thurgh his body wikked wormés crepte,
 And therwithal he stank so horribly
 That noon of al his meynee that hym kepte,
 Wheither so he awook or ellis slepte,
 Ne myghté noght for stynk of hym endure. 3810
 In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte,
 And knew God lord of every créature.

To all his hoost and to hym self also
 Ful wlatson was the stynk of his careyne :
 No man ne myghte hym beré to ne fro ; 3815
 And in this stynk and this horrible peyne,
 He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.
 Thus hath this robbour and this homycide,
 That many a man madé to wepe and pleyne,
 Swich gerdoun as bilongeth unto pryde. 3820

3801. *to-tar*, lacerated.3814. *wlatson*, loathsome.3806. *thurgh*, H⁴ *in*.*careyne*, carcase.3810. *for*, H⁵ *the*.3820. *bilongeth*, H *that longeth*.

The storie of ALISAUNDRE is so commune,
 That every wight that hath discrecioun
 Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.
 This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
 He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun 3825
 They weren glad for pees unto hym sende.
 The pride of man and beest he leyde adoun,
 Wher so he cam, unto the worldés ende.

Comparisoun myghte nevere yet been maked ..
 Bitwixen hym and another conquerour ; 3830
 For al this world for drede of hym hath quaked.
He was of knighthod and of fredom flour ;
Fortune hym made the heir of hire honour ;
Save wyn and wommen no thyng myghte aswage
His hye entente in armés and labour, 3835
So was he ful of leonyn corage.

What preys were it to hym though I yow tolde
 Of Dárius, and an hundred thousand mo,
 Of kyngès, princes, erlès, dukés bolde, 3839
 Whiche he conquered and broghte hem into wo ?
 I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go,
 The world was his,—what sholde I moore devyse ?
 For though I writ or tolde yow everemo
 Of his knyghthode, it myghté nat suffice.

3830. *Bitwixen*, H *Bitwen*,
 Heng.⁴ *Betwixe*.
another, H *noon other*.

3832. *was*, om. E².

3834. *thyng*, E *man*.

Twelf yeer he regnéd, as seith Machabee. 3845

Philippés sone of Macidoynes he was,
That first was kyng in Grecé the contree.

~~O worthy, gentil Alisandre, allas!~~

~~That evere sholdé fallen swich a cas!~~

Empoysoned of thyn owenè folk thou weere; 3850

~~Thy svs Fortune hath turned into aas,~~

And yet for thee ne weepe she never a teere!

Who shal me geven teeris to compleyne

~~The deeth of gentillesse and of franchise,~~

That al the world weilded in his demeyne? 3855

~~And yet hym thoughte it myghté nat suffice,~~

So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.

~~Allas! who shal me helpé to endite~~

~~Falsé Fortune, and poyson to despise,~~

The whiché two of al this wo I wyte? 3860

By ~~wisedom, manhede, and by greet labour~~

From humble bed to roial magestee

~~Up-roos he, JULIUS the conquerour,~~

~~That wan at thoccident, by land and see,~~

By strengthe of hand, or elles by tretee, 3865

~~And unto Romé made hem tributarie;~~

~~And sitthe of Rome the emperour was he.~~

Til that Fortuné weex his adversarie.

3851. *sys* . . . aas, six and
ace.

3852. *yet*, H *right*, E³ *om*.

3859. *despise*, H *devyse*.

3862. *humble bed*, Corp.³ *humble-*
hede.

3866. *tributarie*, H *contribu-*
tarie.

O myghty Cesar ! that in Thessalie
 Agayn Pompëus, fader thyn in lawe, 3870
 That of the orient hadde all the chivalrie
 As fer as that the day bigynheth dawe,
 Thou thurgh thy knyghthod hast hem take and
 slawe,
 Save fewe folk that with Pompëus fledde,
 Thurgh which thou puttest al thorient in awe,— 3875
 Thanké Fortúné, that so wel thee spedde !

But now a litel while I wol biwaille
 This Pompëus, this noble governour
 Of Romé, which that fleigh at this bataille.
 I seye, oon of hise men, a fals traitour, 3880
~~His heed of smoot, to wynnen hym favour~~
~~Of Julius, and hym the heed he broghte.~~
~~Allas, Pompeye, of thorient conquerour,~~
~~That Fortune unto swich a lyn thee broghte !~~

To Rome agayn repaireth Julius 3885
 With his triúmphé, lauriat ful hye ;
 But on a tyme Brutus and Cassius,
 That evere hadde of his hye estaat envye,
 Ful prively had maad conspiracye
 Agayns this Julius in subtil wise, 3890
 And caste the place in which he sholdé dye
 With boydékyns, as I shal yow devyse.

3879. *at, H fro.*3888. *of his hye, Camb.² om.*
*hye ; H to his.*3892. *boydekyns, bodkins,*
stilettos.

This Julius to the Capitolie wente
 Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
 And in the Capitolie anon hym hente 3895
 This falsé Brutus, and hise othere foon,
 And stikéd hym with boydékyns anoon
 With many a wounde, and thus they lete hym lye ;
 But nevere gronte he at no strook but oon,
 Or elles at two, but if his storie lye. 3900

So manly was this Julius of herte,
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,
That though hise deedly woundés sooré smerte,
His mantel over his hypés casté he
For no man sholdé seen his privetee ; 3905
And as he lay of diyng in a traunce,
 And wisté verrailly that deed was hee,
 Of honestee yet hadde he remembraunce.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
 And to Swetoun, and to Valerius also, 3910
 That of this storie writen ord and ende,
 How that to thise grete conquerourés two
 Fortúné was first freend and siththé foo.
 No man ne truste upon hire favour longe,
 But have hire in awayt for evere moo ; 3915
 Witnesse on alle thise conquerourés stronge.

3910. *Valerius*, i.e. Valerius
 Maximus.
 3911. *of*, H *al*.

3911. *ord*, beginning ; Dr.
 Hickes' correction for
 the *word* of the MSS.

This riché CRESUS, whilom kyng of Lyde,
 Of whiché Cresus Cirus soore hym dradde,
 Yet was he caught amyddès al his pryde
 And to be brent men to the fyr hym ladde ; 3920
But swich a reyn doun fro the welkne shadde,
That slow the fyr and made hym to escape ;
But to be war, no gracé yet he hadde,
Til Fortune on the galwès made hym gape.

Whanne he escapéd was he kan nat stente 3925
 For to bigynne a newè werre agayn.
 He wendé wel for that Fortune hym sente .,
 Swich hape that he escapéd thurgh the rayn, . .
 That of hise foos he myghté nat be slayn ;
 And eek a swevene upon a nyght he mette, 3930
 Of which he was so proud, and eek so fayn,
 That in vengeance he al his herté sette.

Upon a tree he was, as that hym thoughte,
 Ther Juppiter hym wesshe, bothe bak and syde,
 And Phebus eek a fair towaille hym broughte 3935
 To dryen hym with, and therfore wex his pryde ;
 And to his doghter, that stood hym bisyde,
 Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
 He bad hire telle hym what it signyfyde,
 And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde : 3940

3920. *And to be brent*, etc., cp. *fuyr to brenne him men*
 Boethius, *De Consola-* *him ladde.*
tione, Bk. ii. prose 2 ; 3921. *welkne*, H *heven.*
 H reads: *And to the* 3930. *swevene*, dream.

"The tree," quod she, "the galwès is to meene ;
 And Juppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
 And Phebus with his towailè so clene,
 Tho been the sonnè-bemès for to seyn ;
 Thou shalt anhangèd be, fader, certeyn,— 3945
 Reyn shal thee wasshe and sonnè shal thee drye ;"
 Thus warnèd she hym ful plat and ful pleyn,
 His doghter which that called was Phanye.

An-hanged was Cresus, the proudè kyng ;
 His roial tronè myghte hym nat availle. 3950
~~Tragédie is noon oother maner thyng ;~~
 Ne kan in syngyng criè ne biwaille
 But for that Fortune alwey wole assaille
 With unwar strook the regnès that been proude ;
~~For whan men trusteth hire, thanne wol she faille,~~
~~And covere hire brighte face with a clowde—~~ 3956

The Knight and the Host complain of this Tale

"Hoo !" quod the Knyght, "good sire, namoore
 of this !

That ye han seyd is right ynough, y-wis,
 And muchel moore ; for litel hevynesse
 Is right ynough to muché folk, I gesse. 3960
 I seye for me it is a greet disese,
 Where as men han been in greet welthe and ese,

3944. *sonne-bemes*, H⁶ *sonne-stremes*.

3947. *plat*, flat.

3954. *With unwar strook*, the phrase is from Boethius, *loc. cit.*

To heeren of hire sodeyn fal, allas !
And the contrarie is joye and greet solas,
 As whan a man hath ben in poure estaat, 3965
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
 And there abideth in prosperitee ;
Swich thyng is gladsom, as it thynketh me,
And of swich thyng were goodly for to telle," 3969
 "Ye," quod oure Hoost, "by Seïnt Poulès belle !
 Ye seye right sooth ; this Monk he clappeth lowde ;
He spak how 'Fortune covered with a clowde,'—
I noot nevere what,—and als of a 'tragédie'
Right now ye herde, and, *pardee*, 'no remédie'
It is for to 'biwailè,' ne compleyne 3975
That that is doon ; and als, it is a peyne,
As ye han seyð, to heere of hevynesse.
Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse !
Youre tale anoyeth all this compaignye ;
Swich talkyng is nat worth a boterflye, 3980
 For therinne is ther no desport ne game.
 Wherefore, sire Monk, daun Piers by yourè name,
 I pray yow hertely, telle us somewhat elles,
For sikerly nere clynkyng of youre belles,
That on youre bridel hange on every syde, 3985
By bevenè kyng, that for us allè dyde !
 I sholde er this han fallen down for sleepe,
 Although the slough had never been so deepe ;

3971. *he clappeth*, H¹ *hath clappid*.

3972. *covered*, H *was clipped*.

3981. *For therinne is ther*,

Heng.³ *Your tales doon us*.

3982. *daun*, sir.
Piers, H² *Pieres*.

3984. *clynkyng*, H *gingling*.

Thanne hadde youre tale al be toold in veyn,
 For certainly, as that thise clerkès seyn, 3990
 Where as a man may have noon audience,
 Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence ;
 And wel I woot the substance is in me,
 If any thyng shal wel reported be.

Sir, sey somewhat of huntyng, I yow preye." 3995
 "Nay!" quod this Monk, "I have no lust to
pleye :

Now lat another telle, as I have toold."

~~Thanne spak oure Hoost with rudè speche and~~
~~boold,~~

And seyde unto the Nonnés Preest anon, 3999

"Com neer, thou preest, com hyder, thou sir John.

~~Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertès glade;~~

~~Be blithè, though thou ryde upon a jade.~~

~~What thogh thyn hors be bothè foule and lene?~~

~~If he wol serve thee, rekkè nat a bene ;~~

~~Looke that thyn herte be murie everemo."~~ 4005

"Yis, sir," quod he, "yis, Hoost, so moot I go,

But I be myrie, y-wis I wol be blamed."

And right anon his tale he hath attamed,

And thus he seyde unto us everichon,

This sweetè preest, this goodly man, sir John. 4010

4000. *hyder*, H² *ner*.

4008. *attamed*, broached.

NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth The Nonnes Preestes Tale of the
Cok and Hen,—Chauntecleer and Pertelote*

A poure wydwe, somdel stape in age,
Was whilom dwellyng in a narwe cotage
Beside a grevé, stondynge in a dale.
This wydwe, of which I tellé yow my tale,
Syn thilké day that she was last a wyf, 4015
In pacience ladde a ful symple lyf,
For litel was hir catel and hir rente.
By housbondrie of swich as God hire sente
She foond hirself, and eek hire doghtren two.
Thre largé sowés hadde she, and namo ; 4020
Three keen and eek a sheep that highté Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hire halle,
In which she eet ful many a sklendre meel ;
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passéd thurgh hir throte, 4025
Hir diete was accordant to hir cote ;
Repleccioun ne made hire nevere sik,
Attempree diete was al hir phisik,
And exercise, and hertés suffisaunce.
The gouté lette hire no-thing for to daunce, 4030

The Nonnes Preestes Tale : 4011. *stape*, advanced.
a fable of Marie de 4012. *narwe*, H *pore*.
France, *Don Coc et don* 4013. *greve*, grove.
Werpil, contains in 38 4017. *rente*, income.
lines the germ of this 4021. *keen*, kine.
tale. 4030. *lette*, hindered.

Napoplexië shenté nat hir heed ;
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed ;
 Hir bord was servéd moost with whit and blak,—
 Milk and broun breed,—in which she foond no lak ;
 Seynd bacoun and somtyme an ey or tweye, 4035
 For she was, as it were, a maner deye.

A yeerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stikkés, and a dryè dych withoute,
 In which she hadde a cok, heet Chauntécleer.
 In al the land of crowyng nas his peer. 4040
 His voys was murier than the murie orgon
 On messé dayes that in the chirché gon ;
 Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.
 By nature knew he eche ascencioun 4045
 Of the equynoxial in thilké toun ;
 For whan degreës fiftene weren ascended,
 Thanne crew he that it myghte nat been amended.
 His coomb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailled as it were a castel wal ; 4050
 His byle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon ;
 Lyk asure were hise leggés and his toon ;
 Hise naylés whiter than the lylve flour,
 And lyk the burnéd gold was his colour.

This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce 4055

4031. *Napoplexie*, etc., nor did
 apoplexy hurt her head.

4035. *Seynd*, singed.
ey, egg.

4036. *deye*, dairywoman.

4044. *orlogge*, sundial, time-
 piece.

4045. *knew he*, E³ *he crew* ; rest
he knew.

4052. *toon*, toes.

4054. *burned*, H⁴ *burnischt*.

Sevene hennés for to doon al his plesaunce,
 Whiche were hise sustrés and his paramours,
 And wonder lyk to hym, as of colours ;
 Of whiche the faireste hewéd on hir throte
 Was cleped faire damoysèlè Pertélote. 4060
 Curteys she was, discreet and debonaire,
 And compaignable, and bar hyrself so faire
 Syn thilkè day that she was seven nyght oold,
 That trewely she hath the herte in hoold
 Of Chauntécleer, loken in every lith ; 4065
 He loved hire so that wel was hym therwith ;
 But swiche a joye was it to here hem synge,—
 Whan that the brightè sonne bigan to sprynge,—
 In sweete accord, “ My lief is faren in londe ; ”
 For thilkè tyme, as I have understonde, 4070
 Beestés and briddés koudé speke and synge.

And so bifel, that in the dawénynge,
 As Chauntécleer among hise wyvès alle
 Sat on his perché, that was in the halle,
 And next hym sat this fairè Pertelote, 4075
 This Chauntécleer gan gronen in his throte,
 As man that in his dreem is drecchéd soore.

And whan that Pertelote thus herde hym roore,
 She was agast, and seyde, “ O hertè deere !
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this manére ? 4080
 Ye been a verray sleper ; fy, for shame ! ”

And he answerde and seyde thus : “ Madame,
 I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief ;

4065. *lith*, limb.4068. *bigan*, H^s *gan*.4077. *drecched*, frightened.

By God, me mette I was in swich meschief
 Right now, that yet myn herte is soore afright. 4085
 Now God," quod he, "my swevene recche aright,
 And kepe my body out of foul prisoun ;
 Me mette how that I roméd up and doun
 Withinne our yeerd, wheer as I saugh a beest 4089
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areest
 Upon my body, and han had me deed.
 His colour was bitwixè yelow and reed,
 And tippéd was his tayl, and bothe hise eeris,
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of hise heeris ;
 His snowtè smal, with glowyng eyeen tweye. 4095
 Yet of his look for feere almoost I deye ;
 This causéd mè my gronyng doutèlees."

"Avoy !" quod she, "fy on yow, hertèlees !
 Allas !" quod she, "for by that God above !
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love. 4100
 I kan nat love a coward, by my feith !
 For certès, what so any womman seith,
 We alle desiren, if it myghtè bee,
 To han housbóndés hardy, wise, and free,
 And secree, and no nygard, ne no fool, 4105
 Ne hym that is agast of every tool,
 Ne noon avauntour, by that God above !
 How dorste ye seyn, for shame, unto youre love
 That any thyng myghte makè yow aferd ?
 Have ye no mannés herte, and han a berd ? 4110

4084. *mette*, dreamt.4086. *recche*, expound ; H⁴ *rede*.4089. *a beest*. The description
is exactly that of a "col-

fox" (l. 4405).

4091. *han*, H⁴ *wold han*.4098. *Avoy*, H *Away*.4104. *wise*, H *riche*.

"Allas! and konne ye been agast of swevenys?
No thyng, God woot, but vanitee in swevene is.

Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight. 4115

"Certés this dreem, which ye han met to-nyght,
Cometh of the greet superfluytee

Of youré redé colera, *pardee*,

Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes

Of arwés, and of fyre with redé lemes, 4120

Of redé beestés that they wol hem byte,

Of contekes and of whelpes, grete and lyte ;

Right as the humour of malencolie

Causeth ful many a man in sleepe to crie,

For feere of blaké beres, or bolés blake, 4125

Or ellés blaké develes wole hem take.

Of othere humours koude I telle also

That werken many a man in sleepe ful wo ;

But I wol passe as lightly as I kan.

Lo, Catoun, which that was so wys a man, 4130

Seyde he nat thus, 'Ne do no fors of drêmes?'

"Now, sire," quod she, "whan we flee fro the
bemes,

For Goddés love, as taak som laxatyf.

Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,

I conseilte yow the beste, I wol nat lye, 4135

4111. *swevenys*, dreams.

4119. *dreden*, H⁴ *dremen*.

4120. *lemes*, gleams ; H *beemes*.

4121. *redé*, E *greté*.

4122. *contekes*, dissensions.

4125. *blake* (1), om. H⁴.

4130. *Catoun*, *Dist.* ii. 32 :
"somnia ne cures."

4132. *we*, E *ye*.

That bothe of colere and of malencolye
 Ye purgè yow, and, for ye shal nat tarie,
 Though in this toun is noon apothecarie,
 I shal myself to herbès techen yow 4139
 That shul been for youre hele, and for youre prow ;
 And in oure yeerd tho herbès shal I fynde,
 The whiche han of hire propretee by kynde
 To purgè yow, bynethe and eek above.
 Forget nat this, for Goddès owenè love !
 Ye been ful coleryk of compleccioun. 4145
 Warè the sonne in his ascencioun
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hoothe ;
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
 Or an agu, that may be yourè bane. 4150
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves
 Of wormès, er ye take youre laxatyves
 Of lawriol, centaure and fumetere,
 Or elles of ellèbor that groweth there,
 Of katapuce or of gaitrys beryis, 4155
 Of herbe yve, growyng in oure yeerd, ther mery is :
 Pekke hem up right as they growe and ete hem yn ;
 Be myrie, housbonde, for youre fader kyn !
 Dredeth no dreem ; I kan sey yow namoore."

"Madame," quod he, "*graunt mercy* of youre
 loore, 4160

But nathèlees, as touchyng daun Catoun,

4140. *prow*, profit.

4153. *centaure and fumetere*,
herbs.

4142. *kynde*, nature.

4155. *gaitrys beryis*, berries of
the dog-wood tree.

4146. *Ware*, beware that.

That hath of wysdom swich a greet renoun,
 Though that he bad no dremés for to drede,
 By God, men may in oldé bookés rede
Of many a man, moore of auctorite 4165
Than evere Caton was, so moot I thee !
That al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience
That dremés been significaciouns
As wel of jove as tribulaciouns, 4170
 That folk enduren in this lif present.
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument,
 The verray preevé sheweth it in dede.

“Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
 Seith thus, that whilom two felawés wente 4175
On pilgrimage in a ful good entente,
And happéd so they coomen in a toun,
Wher as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so suren of herbergage,
That they ne founde as mucche as o cotage 4180
In which they bothé myghté logged bee ;
Wherefore they mosten of necessitee,
 As for that nyght, departen compaignye ;
~~And ech of hem gooth to his hostelrye,~~
 And took his loggyng as it woldé falle. 4185
 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
 Fer in a yeerd, with oxen of the plough ;

4167. *his, E this.*4170. *as, so Heng. and Pet. ;*
rest *as of.*4174. *auctours, Cicero, De Di-*
vin. i. 27, relates both

this and the next story.

4177. *coomen in, H⁴ com into.*4181. H reads : *In which that*
thay might both i-logged
be.

That oother man was logged wel ynough,
 As was his aventure, or his fortune,
 That us governeth, alle as in commune. 4190

"And so bifel that longe er it were day,
 This man mette in his bed, ther as he lay,
 How that his felawe gan upon hym calle,
 And seyde, 'Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This nyght I shal be mordred ther I lye; 4195
Now helpe me, deeré brother, or I dye;
In allé hasté com to me!' he sayde.

"This man out of his sleepe for feere abrayde;
But whan that he was wakened of his sleepe,
He turned hym and took of this no keepe; 4200
Hym thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twiés in his slepyng dredmed hee,
And atté thriddé tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as hym thoughte, and seide, 'I am now
slawe!

Bihooold my bloody woundés, depe and wyde; 4205
Arys up erly in the morwé tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carté ful of donge ther shaltow se,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilké carte arresten boldely, 4210
My gold causéd my mordré, sooth to sayn.'
 And tolde hym every point how he was slayn,
 With a ful pitous facé, pale of hewe;
 And trusté wel, his dreem he foond ful trewe;

4192. *man*, H *oon*.4198. *abrayde*, started.4200. *this*, E *it*.

For on the morwe, as soone as it was day, 4215
 To his felawés in he took the way,
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.

“The hostiler answerdè hym anon
 And seydè, ‘Sire, your felawe is agon ; 4220
 As soone as day he wente out of the toun.’

“This man gan fallen in suspeciou, —
 Remembrynge on hise dremès, that he mette,—
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette,
 Unto the westgate of the toun, and fond 4225
 A dong carte, as it were to dongè lond,
 That was arrayéd in that samè wise
 As ye han herd the dedè man devyse ;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeance and justice of this felonye. 4230
 ‘My felawe mordred is this samè nyght,
 And in this carte he lith gapyng upright.
 I crye out on the ministres,’ quod he,
 ‘That sholden kepe and reulen this citee ;
 Harrow ! allas ! heere lith my felawe slayn !’ 4235
 What sholde I moore unto this talè sayn ?
 The peple out sterte and caste the cart to grounde,
 And in the myddel of the dong they founde
 The dedè man, that mordred was al newe.
 “O blisful God, that art so just and trewe ! 4240
 Lo, howe that thou biwreyst mordre alway !

4222. *fallen in*, H *falle in a*,
 Corp.³ *falle in gret*.
 4232. *he*, E³ *heere he*.

4237. *out sterte*, H³ *upstert*.
 4240. *that art so*, H *thou art*
ful.

Mordre wol out, that se we day by day ;
Mordre is so wlatson, and abhomynable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heléd be, 4245
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or thre ;
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
 And right anon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent the carter, and so soore hym pyned,
 And eek the hostiler so soore engyned, 4250
 That they biknewe hire wikkednesse anon,
 And were an-hanged by the nekké bon.

" Heere may men seen that dremés been to
 drede ;

And certés, in the samé book I rede,
 Right in the nexté chapitre after this, 4255
 I gabbé nat, so have I joye or blis,—
 Two men that wolde han passéd over see
 For certeyn cause into a fer contree,
 If that the wynd ne haddé been contrarie,
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie 4260
 That stood ful myrie upon an haven syde ;
 But on a day, agayn the even tyde,
 The wynd gan chaunge, and blew right as hem
 leste.

Jolif and glad they wente unto hir reste,
 And casten hem ful erly for to saille. 4265

" But to that o man fil a greet merveille ;

4242. *that se we*, etc., H *certes*
it is no nay.

4243. *wlatson*, loathsome.

4245. *heled*, hidden.

4247. *this*, H⁴ *this is*.

4249. *pyned*, tortured.

4250. *engyned*, racked.

4251. *biknewe*, confessed.

That oon of hem in slepyng as he lay,
 Hym mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day :
 Him thoughte a man stood by his beddès syde
 And hym comanded that he sholde abyde, 4270
 And seyde hym thus : ' If thou tomorwé wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt, my tale is at an ende.'

" He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preydé hym his viage for to lette ;
 As for that day, he preydé hym to byde. 4275

" His felawe, that lay by his beddès syde ;
 Gan for to laughe, and scornéd him ful faste ;
 ' No dreem,' quod he, ' may so myn herte agaste,
 That I wol letté for to do my thynges ;
 I setté nat a straw by thy dremynges, 4280
 For swevenes been but vanytees and japes ;
 Men dreme al day of owlés or of apes,
 Ánd of many a mazé therwithal ;
 Men dreme of thyng that nevere was ne shal ;
 But sith I see that thou wolt heere abyde, 4285
 And thus forslewthen wilfully thy tyde,
 God woot it reweth me, and have good day !'
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way ;
 But er that he hadde half his cours y-seyled,
 Noot I nat why, ne what myschaunce it eyled, 4290
 But casuely the shippés botmè rente,
 And shipe and man under the water wente
 In sighte of othere shippés it bisyde,
 That with hem seyléd at the samé tyde !

4274. *lette*, forgo.4283. *And*, H *And eke*.4284. *thyng*, H *things*.

And therfore, fairé Pertélote so deere, 4295
 By swiche ensamplés olde yet maistow leere,
 That no man sholdé been to recchelees
 Of dremés, for I seye thee doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful soore is for to drede.

“Lo, in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede, 4300
 That was Kenulphus sone, the noble kyng
 Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thyng.
 A lite er he was mordred, on a day
 His mordre in his avysioun he say.
 His norice hym expownéd every deel 4305
 His swevene, and bad hym for to kepe hym weel
 For traisoun ; but he nas but seven yeer oold,
 And therfore litel talé hath he toold
 Of any dreem, so hooly was his herte.
 By God, I haddé levere than my sherte 4310
 That ye hadde rad his legende as have I.
 Dame Pertélote, I sey yow trewély,
 Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou, n
 Affermeth dremés, and seëth that they been 4315
 Warnyng of thyngés that men after seen ;
 And forther-moore, I pray yow looketh wel
 In the Oldé Testament of Daniel,
 If he heeld dremés any vanitee.

“Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see 4320

4300. *Kenelm*, murdered by
 his tutor at the desire of
 a wicked sister.

4301. *the*, H *that*.

4304. *say*, saw.

4308. *tale* . . . *toold*, made
 account.

4309. *was*, E *is*.

Wher dremés be somtyme,—I sey nat alle,—
Warnyngé of thyngés that shul after falle.

“Looke of Egipte the kyng, daun Pharao,
His baker and his butiller also,
Wher they ne felté noon effect in dremes. 4325
Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes
May rede of dremés many a wonder thyng.

“Lo, Cresus, which that was of Lydè kyng,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhangd bee? 4330

“Lo heere Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholdé lese his lyf,
She dreméd on the samé nyght biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorne,
If thilké day he wente into bataille; 4335
She warnéd hym, but it myghte nat availle;
He wenté forth to fighté nathéles,
And he was slayn anon of Achilles;
But thilké tale is al to longe to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle; 4340
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forthermoor,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no stoor,
For they been venymés, I woot it weel; 4345
I hem diffye, I love hem never a deel!

~~“Now let us speke of myrthe, and stynte al this;~~
Madamé Pertélote, so have I blis,

4326. *remes*, realms.

4337. *forth*, E⁶ *for*.

4345. *venymes*, H⁴ *venemous*.

4347. *stynte*, H *lete*.

Of o thyng God hath sent me largé grace ;
 For whan I se the beautee of youre face, 4350
 Ye been so scarlet reed aboute youre eyen,
 It maketh al my dredé for to dyen,

For, al-so siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio,—

Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is, 4355
 'Womman is mannés joye, and al his blis ;'

For whan I feele a-nyght your softé syde,
 Al be it that I may nat on yow ryde,
 For that oure perche is maad so narwe, allas !
 I am so ful of joye and of solas, 4360

That I diffyé bothé swevene and dreem :"
 And with that word he fly down fro the beem,
 For it was day, and eke hise hennés alle ;
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to ealle,
 For he hadde founde a corn lay in the yerd. 4365
 Réal he was, he was namoore aferd,

He fethered Pertéloté twenty tyme,
 And trad as offé, er that it was pryme.
 He looketh as it were a grym leoun,
 And on hise toos he rometh up and down ; 4370

Hym deigné nat to sette his foot to grounde.
 He chukketh whan he hath a corn y-founde,
 And to hym rennen thanne hise wyvés alle.
 Thus roial as a prince is in an halle,

4353. *siker*, sure. The real meaning of the Latin is : In the beginning, woman is man's destruction.

4356. *al his*, H repeats *mannes*.

4366. *Real*, royal.

4367. *He*, E *And*.

Leve I this Chauntécleer in his pasture, 4375
And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the monthe in which the world bigan,
That highté March, whan God first makéd man,
Was compleet, and y-passéd were also,

Syn March bigan, thritty dayés and two, 4380
Bifel that Chauntécleer in al his pryde,

Hise sevene wyvès walkynge by his syde,
Caste up hise eyen to the brighté sonne
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne 4384

Twenty degrees and oon, and som-what moore,
And knew by kynde, and by noon oother loore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.

"The sonne," hē seyde, "is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and moore y-wis.

Madamé Pertélote, my worldés blis, 4390
Herkneth thise blisful briddés how they synge,
And se the fresshé flourés how they sprynge;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas!"

But sodeynly hym fil a sorweful cas;
For evere the latter ende of joy is wo. 4395

God woot that worldly joye is soone ago,
And if a rethor koudé faire endite,
He in a cronycle saufly myghte it write,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.

4379. *y-passed*, E⁶ *passed*.

4380. *thritty dayes and*, H
tway monthes and dayes!

4387. *pryme*, about 6 A.M.
stevne, voice.

4389. *Fourty*, H *Twenty*; but

perhaps Chaucer is laugh-
ing at the cock.

4397. *rethor*, rhetorician.

4399. E and Heng. assign the
saying to Petrus Come-
stor.

Now every wys man, lat him herkné me ; 4400
 This storie is al so trewe, I undertake,
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
 That wommen holde in ful greet reverence.
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.

~~A colfox, ful of sly iniquitee,~~ 4405
 That in the grove hadde wonned yerés three,
 By heigh ymaginacioun forn-cast,
~~The samé nyght thurgh-out the heggés brast,~~
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntécleer the faire
 Was wont, and eek hise wyvés, to repaire ; 4410
 And in a bed of wortés stille he lay,
 Til it was passéd undren of the day,
 Waitynge his tyme on Chauntécleer to falle ;
 As gladly doon thise homycidés alle
 That in await liggen to mordré men. 4415

O falsé mordroure lurkyng in thy den !
 O newé Scariot, newé Genyloun !
 Falsé dissymulour, O Greek Synoun,
 That broghtest Troye al outrély to sorwe !
 O Chauntécleer, acurséd be that morwe, 4420
 That thou into that yerd flaugh fro the bemes !
 Thou were ful wel y-warnéd by thy dremés
 That thilké day was perilous to thee ;
 But what that God forwoot moot nedés bee,

4404. *torne*, E *come*.4405. *colfox*, a brant-fox, *i.e.*
 one with black hairs
 amid the brown.*sly*, Corp.³ *sleight and*.4406. *wonned*, dwelt.4411. *wortes*, vegetables.4412. *undren*, between nine and
 noon.4417. *Genyloun*, the betrayer of
 Roland.

After the opinioun of certein clerkis. 4425
 Witnesse on hym that any parfit clerk is,
 That in scole is greet altercacioun
 In this mateere, and greet disputisoun,
 And hath been of an hundred thousand men ;
 But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren, 4430
 As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,
 Or Boece, or the bisshope Bradwardyn,
 Wheither that Goddés worthy forwityng
 Streyneth me nedefully to doon a thyng,—
 Nedely clepe I symple necessitee,— 4435
 Or ellés if free choys be graunted me
 To do that samé thyng, or do it noght,
 Though God forwoot it er that it was wrought ;
 Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel,
 But by necessitee condicioneel. 4440
 I wil nat han to do of swich mateere,
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere,
That took his conseil of his wyf with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he hadde met that dreem that I yow tolde. 4445
Wommennés conseils been ful ofté colde ;
Wommannés conseil broghte us first to wo
And made Adam fro Paradys to go,
Ther as he was ful myrie and wel at ese ;
But for I noot to whom it myght displese, 4450

4430. *bulte it*, sift it to the bran.4432. *Boece*, Boethius.
Bradwardyn, author of
 the "De Causa Dei
 contra Pelagium," d. 1349.
4433. *forwityng*, foreknowledge.4442. *may*, H³ *shal*.4445. *yow*, E *of*.

If I conseil of wommen woldé blame,
Passe over, for I seyè it in my game.

Rede auctours where they trete of swich mateere,
And what they seyn of wommen ye may heere ;

Thise been the cokkès wordès, and nat myne, 4455
I kan noon harm of no womman divyne !

Faire in the soond, to bathe hire myrily,
 Lith Pertélote, and alle hire sustres by,
 Agayn the sonne, and Chauntécleer so free
 Soong murier than the mermayde in the see ; 4460
 For *Physiologus* seith sikerly,
 How that they syngen wel and myrily.

And so bifel that as he cast his eye
 Among the wortès, on a boterflye,
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe. 4465
 No-thing ne liste hym thannè for to crowe,
 But cride anon, "Cok, cok !" and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayèd in his herte,—
 For naturèlly a beest desireth flee
 Fro his contrárie, if he may it see, 4470
 Though he never erst hadde seyn it with his eye.

This Chauntécleer, whan he gan hym espye,
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde, "Gentil sire, allas ! wher wol ye gon ?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am youre freend ? 4475
 Now, certès, I were worsè than a feend,

4457. *soond*, sand.

4461. *Physiologus*, i.e. the
Physiologus de naturis
xiii. animalium, written
 by a certain Theobaldus.

4474. *wher*, H *why*, Corp.³
what wol ye doon.

4476. *Now*, om. H⁴; Corp.³
 reads *Certes sire then be*
ye unheende.

If I to yow wolde harm or vileynye.
 I am nat come your conseil for tespye,
 But trewely the cause of my comynge
 Was oonly for to herkne how that ye synge ; 4480
 For trewely, ye have as myrie a stevene
As any aungel hath that is in hevene.
Therwith ye han in musyk moore feelynge
Than hadde Boece, or any that kan synge.
My lord youre fader, — God his soule blesse ! 4485
And eek youre mooder, of hire gentillesse,
Han in myn hous y-been to my greet ese,
And certès, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plesse.
But for men speke of syngyng, I wol seye, —
So moote I brouké wel myne eyen tweye, — 4490
Save yow, I herde nevere man so synge
As dide youre fader in the mornynge.
 Certès, it was of herte, al that he song ;
 And for to make his voys the moore strong, 4494
 He wolde so peyne hym that with bothe hise eyen
He moste wynke, so loude he woldé cryen ;
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And strecche forth his nekke, long and smal ;
And eek he was of swich discrecioun —
That ther nas no man in no regioun 4500
That hym in song or wisdom myghte passe.
I have wel rad, in ‘Daun Burnel the Asse,’

4484. *Boece*, Boethius wrote a treatise on music.
 4490. *brouke*, enjoy the use of.
 4491. *I herde*, E *herde* I.

4491. *so*, E *yet*.
 4502. *Daun Burnel the Asse*, in the *Speculum Stultorum* of Nigel Wireker.

Among hise vers, how that ther was a cok,
~~For that a preestes sone gaf hym a knok~~
 Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce, 4505
~~He made hym for to lese his benefice ;~~
 But certeyn, ther nys no ~~comparisoun~~
 Bitwixe the wisdom and discrecioun
 Of youré fader and of his subtiltee.
 Now syngeth, sire, for seinté charitee ; 4510
 Lat se, konne ye youre fader countrefete."

~~This Chauntécleer hise wyngés gan to bete,~~
~~As man that koude his traysoun nat espie,~~
~~So was he ravysshed with his flaterie.~~ }
 Allas, ye lordés, many a fals flatour 4515

Is in youre courtes, and many a losengeour,
~~That plesen yow wel moóre, by my feith,~~
~~Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith,—~~
 Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye,—
 Beth war, ye lordés, of hir trecherye. 4520

~~This Chauntécleer stood hye upon his toos~~
~~Strecchyng his nekke, and heeld hise eyen cloos,~~
~~And gan to crowé loudé for the nones,~~
~~And daun Russell, the fox, stirte up atones,~~
 And by the gargat henté Chauntécleer, 4525
 And on his bak toward the wode hym beer ;
 For yet ne was ther no man that hym sewed.

O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed !
 Allas, that Chauntécleer fleigh fro the bemes !

4515. *ye lordes*, H *lordynges*.4516. *courtes*, H *hous*.*losengeour*, flatterer.4525. *gargat*, throat.*hente*, seized.4527. *sewed*, pursued.

Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes ! 4530
 And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.

O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Syn that thy servant was this Chauntécleer,
 And in thy servyce dide al his poweer,
 Moore for delit than world to multiplie, 4535
 Why woltestow suffre hym on thy day to dye ?

O Gaufred, deeré maister soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy kyng Richard was slayn
 With shot, compleynédest his deeth so soore !
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence, and thy loore,
 The Friday for to chide, as diden ye ?— 4541
 For on a Friday, soothly, slayn was he.
 Thanne wolde I shewe yow how that I koude pleyne
 For Chauntéclerés drede, and for his peyne.

Certés, swich cry, ne lamentacioun, 4545
 Was nevere of ladyes maad whan Ylioun
 Was wonne, and Pirrus, with his streité swerd,
 Whan he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd,
 And slayn hym,—as seith us *Encydos*,—
 As maden alle the hennés in the clos, 4550
 Whan they had seyn of Chauntécleer the sighte.
 But sovereynly dame Pertéloté shrighite,
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubalés wyf,
 Whan that hir housbonde haddé lost his lyf,
 And that the Romayns haddé brend Cartage,—
 She was so ful of torment and of rage, 4556

4537. *Gaufred*, Geoffrey of Vinesauf; author of a treatise on the art of poetry, in which, to show how such poems should be written, he bewailed the death of Richard. 4550. *clos*, pen.

That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hirselves with a stedefast herte.

O woful hennés, right so criden ye,
As, whan that Nero brendé the citee 4560
Of Romé, cryden senatourés wyves,
For that hir husbondes losten alle hir lyves
Withouten gilt,—this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torné to my tale agayn.

This sely wydwe, and eek hir doghtrés two, 4565
Herden thise hennés crie and maken wo,
And out at dorés stirten they anon,
And syen the fox toward the grové gon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away,
And cryden, "Out! harrow! and weylaway! 4570
Ha! ha! the fox!" and after hym they ran,
And eek with stavés many another man;
Ran Colle, oure dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland
And Malkyn, with a dystaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges, 4575
So were they fered for berkyng of the dogges,
And shoutyng of the men and wommen eek;
They ronné so hem thoughte hir herté brek.
They yolléden, as feendés doon in helle;
The dokés cryden, as men wolde hem quelle; 4580
The gees, for feeré, flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyvé cam the swarm of bees;

4564. *wol I torné, E turne I*
wolé.
tale, H matier.

4565. *eek, om. H⁴.*

4576. *So were they fered, E² so*
fered, Camb. forfered,
Corp.³ sore aferd.

4580. *dokes, ducks.*
quelle, kill.

So hydous was the noys, a *benedicitee*!
 Certès, he Jakke Straw, and his meynee,
 Ne made nevere shoutès half so shrille, 4585
 Whan that they wolden any Flemyng kille,
 As thilkè day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras they broghten bemès, and of box,
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and powped,
 And therwithal they skrikèd and they howped; 4590
 It seméd as that hevene sholdé falle.

Now, goodé men, I pray yow herkneth alle;
 Lo, how Fortuné turneth sodeynly
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak, 4595
In al his drede unto the fox he spak,
And seyde, "Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet wolde I seyn, as wys God helpé me,
"Turneth agayn, ye proude cherlès alle!
A verray pestilence upon yow falle; 4600
Now am I come unto the wodès syde,
Maugree youre heed, the cok shal heere abyde;
I wol hym ete in feith, and that anon!"

The fox answerde, "In feith it shal be don;"
And as he spak that word, al sodeynly 4605
This cok brak from his mouth delyverly,
And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon;
 And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,—

"Allas!" quod he, "O Chauntécleer, allas!

4586. *Flemyng*, to whose competition the English craftsmen objected.

4588. *bemes*, trumpets.

4594. *eek*, om. E.

4605. *as*, H *whil*; rest om.

4606. *delyverly*, adroitly.

I have to yow," quod he, "y-doon trespas, 4610

In as muche as I makèd yow aferd,

Whan I yow hente and broght out of the yerd ;

But, sire, I dide it of no wikke entente.

Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente ;

I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so !" 4615

~~"Nay thanne," quod he, "I shrewe us bothè two,~~

~~And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,~~

If thou bigyle me any ofter than ones.

~~Thou shalt na moore, thurgh thy flaterye,~~

~~Do me to synge, and wynké with myn eye,~~ 4620

~~For he that wynketh, whan he sholdè see,~~

~~Al wilfully, God lat him nevere thee !"~~

"Nay," quod the fox, "but God geve hym
meschaunce,

That is so undiscreet of governaunce

That jangleth whan he sholdè holde his pees." 4625

Lo, swich it is for to be recchélees,

~~And negligēt, and truste on flaterye.~~

But ye that holden this tale a folye,—

~~As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,—~~

~~Takèth the moralite, goode mē ;~~ 4630

For Saint Paul seith that al that writen is,

~~To oure doctrine it is y-write y-wis ;~~

~~Taketh the fruyt and lat the char be stille.~~

Now, goodè God, if that it be thy wille,

As seith my lord, so make us alle goode men, 4635

And brynge us to his heighè blisse ! *Amen.*

4612. *hente*, seized.

4622. *thee*, thrive.

4636. *us*, H³ *us alle*.

Words of the Host to the Nun's Priest

"Sire Nonnès Preest," oure Hoostè seide anon,
 "I-blessèd be thy breche and every stone !
 This was a murie tale of Chaunticleer ;
 But, by my trouthe, if thou were seculer, 4640
 Thou woldest ben a tredéfoul aright ;
 For if thou have coráge, as thou hast might,
 The weré nede of hennès, as I wene,
 Ye, mo than sevene tymès seventene !
 Se, which braunès hath this gentil preest, 4645
 So gret a nekke, and swich a largè breest !
 He loketh as a sparhawke with hise eyen ;
 Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyghen
 With Brasile, ne with greyn of Portyngale.
 Now, sire, faire fallè yow for yourè tale." 4650
 And after that, he with ful merie chere
 Seide unto another as ye shuln heere.

4637. *Sire Nonnes Preest*, only
 three MSS., one at Camb.
 and two at the Brit. Mus.,
 contain this end-link.
 Its authenticity is not

above suspicion ; l. 4641
 repeats B. 3135, and
 "seide unto *another*"
 could hardly have been
 written by Chaucer.

TALES OF THE THIRD DAY

GROUP C

DOCTOR'S TALE

Heere folweth The Phisiciens Tale

THER was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knyght that calléd was Virginius,
Fulfilde of honour and of worthynesse,
And strong of freendés and of greet richesse.

This knyght a doghter haddé by his wyf,— 5
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.
Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee

GROUP C. These two tales follow the Franklin's in E. Dr. Furnivall is responsible for their present placing, which is not a matter of certainty.

Doctor's Tale, taken, as to its incidents, as Prof. Lounsbury shows, including the reference to

Livy, from the *Roman de la Rose*, ll. 6324-94. In this tale E and Heng. differ greatly from H^b; these last have some absurd readings, here omitted, but are often good.

2. *called*, H^b *cleped*.

6. *No children*, H^b *and never ne* (H only, *ne*).

Aboven every wight that man may see ;
 For Nature hath with sovereyn diligence
Y-forméd hire in so greet excellence, 10
 As though she woldé seyn, "Lo, I, Natúre,
Thus kan I forme, and peynte a créature,
Whan that me list,—who kan me countrefete ?
Pigmalion ? Noght, though he ay forge and bête,
 Or grave, or peynté ; for I dar wel seyn 15
Apellés, Zanzis sholdé werche in veyn,
Outher to grave, or peynte, or forge, or bete,
If they presumed me to countrefete.
 For He that is the Formere principal
 Hath makéd me his vicaire-general 20
 To forme and peynten erthely créaturis
 Right as me list, and ech thyng in my cure is
 Under the mooné that may wane and waxe ;
 And for my werk right no thyng wol I axe ;
 My lord and I been ful of oon accord. 25
 I made hire to the worshiþe of my lord ;
 So do I alle myne othere créatures,
 What colour that they han, or what figures."
 Thus semeth me that Nature woldé seye.

This mayde of agé twelve yeer was and tweye
 In which that Nature haddé swich delit ; 31
 For, right as she kan peynte a lilie whit,
 And reed a rosé, right with swich peynture

14. *ay*, H⁵ *alwey*.16. *Zanzis*, Zeuxis.21. *creaturis*, H⁵ *creature*.22. *and ech thyng*, etc., H⁵ *al thyng is in my cure*.24. *werk right*, H⁵ *werké*.25. *ful of oon*, H⁵ *fully at*.28. *kan*, H⁵ *been*.33. *reed*, H⁵ *rody*.

She peynted hath this noble creature,
 Er she were born, upon hir lymés fre, 35
 Where as by right swiche colours sholdé be ;
 And Phebus dyéd hath hire treses grete
 Lyk to the stremés of his burnéd heete ;
 And if that excellent was hire beautee,
~~A thousand foold moore vertuous was she.~~ 40
~~In hire ne lakkéd no condicioun~~
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
~~As wel in goost, as body, chast was she,~~
~~For which she flouréd in virginitee~~
~~With alle humylitee and abstinence,~~ 45
~~With alle attemperaunce and pacience,~~
~~With mesure eek of beryng and array.~~
 Discreet she was in answeyng alway,
 Though she were wise as Pallas, dar I seyn ;
 Hir facound eek, ful wommanly and pleyn ; 50
~~No countrefeted termés haddé she~~
~~To semé wys ; but after hir degree~~
~~She spak, and alle hire wordés, moore and lesse,~~
~~Sownynge in vertu and in gentillesse ;~~
~~Shamefast she was, in maydens shamefastnesse,~~ 55
~~Constant in herte, and evere in bisynesse~~
~~To dryve hire out of ydel slogardye.~~
 Bacus hadde of hire mouth right no maistrie,
 For wyn and youthé dooth Venus encresse ;
 As man in fyr wol casten oille or gresse. 60
 And of hir owene vertu unconstreyned

50. *facound*, eloquence.57. *ydel*, H⁵ *hir*.60. *casten*, E *wasten*.

She hath ful ofté tymé syk hire feyned,
 For that she woldé fleen the compaignye
 Where likly was to treten of folye,—
 As is at feestés, revels, and at daunces, 65
 That been occasions of daliaunces.

Swich thyngés maken children for to be
 To sooné rype and boold, as men may se,
 Which is ful perilous, and hath been yoore,
 For al to sooné may they lerné loore 70
 Of booldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.

And ye maistresses, in youre oldé lyf
 That ~~lordés doghtrés han in governaunce,~~
 Ne taketh of my wordes no displeaunce;
 Thenketh that ye been set in governynges 75
 Of lordés doghtrés, oonly for two thynges:
 Outher for ye han kept youre honestee,
 Or ellés ye han falle in freletee,
 And knowen wel ynough the oldé daunce,
 And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce 80
 For everemo: therefore for Cristés sake
 To teche hem vertu looke that ye ne slake.

~~A theef of venysoun, that hath forlaft~~
~~His likerousnesse and al his oldé craft,~~
 Kan kepe a forest best of any man; 85
 Now kepeth wel, for if ye wolde ye kan;
 Looke wel that ye unto no vice assente,

67. *thynges*, E³ *thyng*.

70. *they*, H⁵ *sche*.

71. *woxen*, om. H⁵, reading
boldness.

74. *wordes*, H⁴ *word*.

82. H⁵ read *Kepeth wel tho that*
ye undertake.

84. *olde*, H⁵ *theves*.

86. *if ye wolde*, H⁵ *and ye*
wil.

Lest ye be dampned for youre wikke entente ;
 For who so dooth a traitour is certeyn ;
 And taketh kepe of that that I shal seyn ; 90
 Of allé tresons, sovereyn pestilence
 Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.

Ye fadrés and ye moodrés eek, also,
 Though ye han children, be it oon or mo,
 Youre is the charge of al hir surveiaunce, 95
 Whil that they been under youre governaunce ;
 Beth war, if by ensample of youre lyvyng,
 Or by youre negligence in chastisyng,
 That they perissé ; for I dar wel seye,
 If that they doon, ye shul it deere abeye. 100
 Under a shepherde softe and negligent
 The wolf hath many a sheepe and lamb to-rent.
 Suffiseth oon ensample now as heere,
 For I moot turne agayne to my matere.

This mayde, of which I wol this tale expresse,
 So kepte hir self hir neded no maistresse ; 106
 For in hir lyvyng maydens myghten rede,
 As in a book, every good word or dede
 That longeth to a mayden vertuous,
 She was so prudent and so bounteuous ; 110
 For which the fame out sprong on every syde,
 Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde,
 That thurgh that land they preiséd hire, echone
 That lovéd vertu, save Envye allone,

94. *mo*, E³ *two*.97-99. *if . . . perisse*, H⁵ *that*
 . . . *ne perische*.100. *deere*, H⁵ *ful sore*.105. *wol*, H⁵ *telle*.108. *or*, H⁵ *and*.

That sory is of oother mennés wele, 115
 And glad is of his sorwe and his unheelee ;
 The doctour maketh this descripcioun.

This mayde upon a day wente in the toun
 Toward a temple, with hire mooder deere,
 As is of yongé maydens the manere. 120
 Now was ther thanne a justice in that toun,
 That governour was of that regioun,
 And so bifel this juge hise eyen caste
 Upon this mayde, avysynge hym ful faste,
 As she cam forby, ther as this juge stood. 125
 Anon his herté chaungéd and his mood,
 So was he caught with beautee of this mayde,
 And to hymself ful pryvèly he sayde,
 "This maydè shal be myn, for any man!"

Anon the feend into his herté ran, 130
 And taughte hym sodeynly that he by slyghte
The mayden to his purpos wynné myghte ;
For certés, by no force, ne by no meede,
Hym thoughte, he was nat able for to speede ;
For she was strong of freendès, and eek she 135
Conferméd was in swich soverayn bountee,
That wel he wiste he myghte hire nevere wynne
As for to maken hire with hir body synné ;
 For which by greet deliberacioun
 He sente after a cherl was in the toun, 140

116. *his* (2), om. H⁵.

117. *The doctour*, glossed 'Augustinus' in E².

125. *ther as this juge*, H⁵ *ther the juge*.

138. *maken*, H⁶ *make*.

140. *cherl*, here and passim H⁵ read *clerk*; the *Roman de la Rose* has *serjant*.

Which that he knew for-subtil and for-boold.
 This juge unto this cherl his tale hath toold
 In secree wise, and made hym to ensure
 He sholdé telle it to no creäture,
 And if he dide he sholdé lese his heed. 145
 Whan that assented was this curséd reed
 Glad was this juge, and makéd him greet cheere,
 And gaf hym giftés, preciouise and deere.
 Whan shapen was al hire conspiracie,
 Fro point to point, how that his lecherie 150
 Parfournéd sholdé been ful subtilly,
 As ye shul heere it after openly,
 Hoom gooth the cherl, that highté Claudius.
 This falsé jugé that highte Apius,—
 So was his namé, for this is no fable, 155
 But knowen for historial thyng notable ;
 The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute,—
 This falsé jugé gooth now faste aboute
 To hasten his delit al that he may ;
 And so bifel soone after, on a day, 160
 This falsé juge, as telleth us the storie,
 As he was wont, sat in his consistórie :
 And gaf his doomés upon sondry cas,
 This falsé cherl cam forth, a ful greet pas,

141. *for-subtil and for-boold*,
 the MSS. read *for subtil*,
for boold, but it seems
 best to treat *for* as an un-
 complimentary intensive.
 147. *maked him greet cheere*,
 H⁵ *made glad* (Lans.
goode) *cheere*.

149. *hire*, H⁵ *this*.
 152. *it after*, H⁵ *afterward*.
 157. *sentence*, purport.
 162. *consistorie*, judgment-seat.
 164. *a ful greet pas*, quickly ;
 H⁵ *good for greet*.

And seyde, "Lord, if that it be youre wille, 165
 As dooth me right upon this pitous bille,
 In which I pleyne upon Virginius ;
 And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,
 I wol it preeve, and fyndé good witnesse
 That sooth is that my billé wol expresse." 170

The jüge answerde, "Of this in his absence
 I may nat geve diffynytyve sentence ;
 Lat do hym calle, and I wol gladly heere ;
 Thou shalt have allé right and no wrong heere."

Virginius cam to wite the juges wille, 175
 And right anon was rad this curséd bille ;
 The sentence of it was as ye shul heere :—

*To yow, my lord, sire Apius so deere,
 Sheweth youre pouré servant Claudius,
 How that a knyght, called Virginius, 180
 Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
 Holdeth, expres agayn the wyl of me,
 My servant, which that is my thral by right,
 Which fro myn hous was stole upon a nyght,
 Whil that she was ful yong ; this wol I preeve 185
 By witnesse, lord, so that it nat yow greeve.
 She nys his doghter, nat what so he seye ;
 Wherfore to yow, my lord, the jüge, I preye,
 Yeld me my thral, if that it be youre wille.
 Lo, this was al the sentence of his bille. 190*

Virginius gan upon the cherl biholde,
 But hastily, er he his talé tolde,

166. *bille*, petition.

174. *allé*, E² *al*, Corp.³ om.

187. *nat*, H¹ place before *his*.

190. *his*, H⁴ *the*.

And wolde have preevèd it, as sholde a knyght,
 And eek by witnessyng of many a wight,
 That it was fals that seyde his adversarie,— 195
 This cursèd jugé woldé no thyng tarie,
 Ne heere a word moore of Virginius,
 But gaf his juggément, and seyde thus :—

“I deeme anon this cherl his servant have ;
 Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir save. 200
 Go, bryng hire forth, and put hire in oure warde.
 The cherl shal have his thral ; this I awarde.”

And whan this worthy knyght, Virginius,
 Thurgh sentence of this justice Apius,
 Mosté by force his deeré doghter geven 205
 Unto the juge, in lecherie to lyven,
 He gooth hym hoom and sette him in his halle,
 And leet anon his deeré doghter calle,
 And with a facé deed as asshen colde,
 Upon hir humble face he gan biholde, 210
 With fadrès pitee stikyng thurgh his herte,
 Al wolde he from his purpos nat converte.

“Doghter,” quod he, “Virginia by thy name,
 Ther been two weyès, outhere deeth or shame,
 That thou most suffre ; allas ! that I was bore ! 215
 For nevere thou deservedest wherfore
 To dyen with a swerd, or with a knyf.
 O deeré doghter, endere of my lyf,
 Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce
 That thou were nevere out of my remembraunce ;

196. *no thyng*, H⁴ *no lenger*.

202. *the*, H⁴ *this*.

204. *sentence . . . justice*, H⁴

thassent . . . juge.

O doghter, which that art my lastè wo, 221
 And in my lyf my lastè joye also ;
 O gemme of chastitee ! in pacience
 Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
 For love, and nat for hate, thou most be deed : 225
 My pitous hand moot smyten of thyn heed !
 Allas ! that evere Apius the say !
 Thus hath he falsly juggèd the to day ;"
 And tolde hire al the cas, as ye bifore
 Han herd, nat nedeth for to telle it moore. 230
 "O mercy, deerè fader !" quod this mayde,
 And with that word she both hir armès layde
 About his nekke, as she was wont to do ;
 The teeris bruste out of hir eyen two,
 And seyde, "Goodè fader, shal I dye ? 235
 Is ther no grace, is ther no remedye ?"
 "No, certès, deerè doghter myn," quod he.
 "Thanne gif me leyser, fader myn," quod she,
 "My deeth for to compleyne a litel space,
 For *pardee* Jeptè gaf his doghter grace 240
 For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas !
 And God it woot, no thyng was hir trespas,
 But for she ran hir fader for to see,
 To welcome hym with greet solèmpnitee."
 And with that word she fil aswowne anon, 245
 And after, whan hir swowning is agon,
 She riseth up, and to hir fader sayde,

223. *of*, E o, in error.230. *nat nedeth for*, H^b *it nedeth nought*.231. O, om. H^a.238. *leyser*, H^b *leve*.243. *for . . . for*, H^b *that . . . first*.246. *is*, H^b *was*.

"Blissed be God, that I shal dye a mayde ;
 Gif me my deeth, er that I have a shame ;
 Dooth with youre child youre wyl, a Goddès name !"

And with that word she preyed hym ful ofte 251

That with his swerd he woldé smyté softe ;

And with that word aswowné doun she fil.

Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,

Hir heed of smoot, and by the tope it hente, 255

And to the juge he gan it to presente,

As he sat yet in doom in consistórie ;

And whan the juge it saugh, as seith the storie,

He bad to take hym and anhangen hym faste ;

But right anon a thousand peple in thraste, 260

To save the knyght, for routhe and for pitee ;

For knowen was the false inquitee.

The peple anon hath suspect of this thyng,

By manere of the cherlès chalangyng,

That it was by the assent of Apius ; 265

They wisten wel that he was lecherus ;

For which unto this Apius they gon,

And caste hym in a prisoun right anon,

Ther as he slow hymself ; and Claudius,

That servant was unto this Apius, 270

Was deméd for to hange upon a tree ;

But that Virginius, of his pitee,

So preyed for hym that he was exiled,

And ellès, certès, he had been bigyled.

253, 254. *fil* . . . *wil*, H⁵ *fel*
 . . . *fel*.

257. *in doom*, etc., in judgment
 at his seat.

260. *a thousand*, H⁵ *alle the*.

271. *Was*, E *And*.

272. *that*, om. H⁵, inserting
grete before *pilce*.

The remenant were anhangèd, moore and lesse,
 That were consentant of this cursednesse. . . . 276
Heere men may seen how synne hath his merite,
 Beth war, for no man woot whom God wol smyte,
In no degree; ne in which manere wyse
The worm of conscience may agryse 280
 Of wikked lyf, though it so pryvee be
 That no man woot ther-of but God and he;
For be he lewèd man, or ellis lered,
 He noot how soone that he shal been afered;
 Therfore, I redé yow, this conseil take, 285
 Forsaketh synne, er synné yow forsake.

*The wordes of the Hoost to the Phisicien and the
 Pardoner*

Oure Hoosté gan to swere as he were wood;
 "Harrow!" quod he, "by naylès, and by blood!
 This was a fals cherl and a fals justise!
 As shameful deeth as herté may devyse 290
 Come to thise jugès, and hire advocatz!
 Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!
 Allas! to deeré boughté she beautee!

275. *The remenant*, the witnesses promised in l. 186.
 278. *whom*, H⁵ *how*.
 280. *may agryse* (be horrified), H⁵ *wol arise*.
 282. *ther-of*, H⁵ *of it*.
 283. H⁵ read *Wher* (*whether*) *that he be lewèd man or lered*.
 289. *fals cherl and*, H⁴ *cursed thef*.
 290. *shameful*, H² *schendful*.
 291, 292. H⁵ have the more vigorous couplet:
 So falle upon his body and
 his boones,
 The devel I bykenne him,
 al at oones.
 291. *jugès*, E *false juges*.

Wherefore I seye al day, as men may see,
~~The giftes of Fortúne and of Nature~~ 295
~~Been cause of deeth to many a creature.~~
~~Hire beautee was hire deth, I dar wel sayn ;~~
~~Allas ! so pitously as she was slayn !~~
~~Of bothe giftes that I speke of now~~
~~Men han ful ofte moore harm than prow.~~ 300

"But trewely, myn owene maister deere,
 This is a pitous talé for to heere ;
 But nathélees, passe over, is no fors,
 I pray to God so save thy gentil cors,
 And eek thyne uryngals, and thy jurdones, 305
 Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galiones,
 And every boyste ful of thy letuarie ;
 God blesse hem, and oure lady Seint Marie !
 So moot I theen, thou art a propré man,
 And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan ! 310
 Seyde I nat wel, I kan nat speke in terme ?
 But wel I woot thou doost myn herte to erme
 That I almoost have caught a cardynacle.
 By *corpus* bones ! but I have triacle,
 Or elles a draughte of moyste and corny ale, 315
 Or but I heere anon a myrie tale,
 Myn herte is lost, for pitee of this mayde.

294. *al day*, etc., H³ *that alle men may see.*

297, 298. om. E⁴.

299, 300. om. H.

300. *harm*, E² *for harm*.

303. *is*, H *this is*.

305, 306. om. H.

307. *boyste*, box.

307. *letuarie*, electuary.

309. *theen*, thrive.

311. *in terme*, precisely.

312. *erme*, grieve.

313. *cardynacle*, heart-disease.

314. *triacle*, treacle, a panacea.

317. *lost*, H *brost*.

Thou *beel amy*, thou Pardoner," he sayde,
 "Telle us som myrthe, or japès, right anon !"

"It shal be doon," quod he, "by Seint Ronyon !
 "But first," quod he, "heere at this alè stake 321
 I wol bothe drynke and eten of a cake."

And right anon the gentils gonne to crye,
 "Nay ! lat hym telle us of no ribaudye ;
 Telle us som moral thyng, that we may leere 325
 Som wit, and thannè wol we gladly heere."

"I graunte, y-wis," quod he, "but I moot thynke
 Upon som honeste thyng, while that I drynke."

Heere folweth The Preamble of the Pardoners Tale

"Lordynges," quod he, "in chirchès whan I
 preche,

I peynè me to han an hauteyn speche, 330
 And ryngè it out as round as gooth a belle,
 For I kan al by rotè that I telle.

My theme is alwey oon, and evere was,—
Radix malorum est Cupiditas.

"First, I pronouncè whennès that I come, 335
 And thanne my bullès shewe I alle and some ;
 Oure ligè lordès seel on my patente,

319. H reads *Tel us a tale for
 thou canst many oon,
 ending next line and
 that anon.*

326, 327. H reads *Gladly, quod
 he, and sayde as ye schal
 heere, But in the cuppe
 wil I me bethinke.*

328. *thyng*, H *tale*.

329. *chirches*, H³ *chirche*.

330. *hauteyn*, haughty.

331. *as round as gooth*, H *as
 lowd as doth*.

334. *malorum*, H⁴ *omnium
 malorum*.

That shewe I first, my body to warente,
 That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,
 Me to destourbe of Cristès hooly werk ; 340
 And, after, that thanne telle I forth my tales,
 Bullès of popès and of cardynales,
 Of patriarkes and bishoppès I shewe,
 And in Latyn I speke a wordès fewe
 To saffron with my predicacioun, 345
 And for to stire hem to devocioun ;
 Thanne shewe I forth my longè cristal stones
 Y-cramméd ful of cloutès and of bones,—
 Relikes been they, as wenen they echoon ;
 Thanne have I in latoun a sholder boon 350
 Which that was of an hooly Jewès sheepe.

“ ‘Goode men,’ I seye, ‘taak of my wordès
 keepe,—

If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
 If cow, or calf, or sheepe, or oxé swelle
 That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge, 355
 Taak water of that welle and wassh his tonge,
 And it is hool anon ; and forthermoor
 Of pokkès, and of scabbe, and every soor,
 Shal every sheepe be hool that of this welle 359
 Drynketh a draughte. Taak kepe eek what I telle.

“ ‘If that the goode man that the beestès oweth
 Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,
 Fastyngè, drinkè of this welle a draughte,

339. *boold, ne, H hardy, Camb.³
 bolde.*

343. *and, H² and of.*

345. *saffron, H⁴ savore.*

349. *wenen, H⁴ wene.*

350. *latoun, a kind of brass.*

360. *kepe, H³ heed.*

362. *wyke, week.*

As thilké hooly Jew oure eldrés taughte,
Hise beestés and his stoor shal multiplie. 365

“ ‘And, sires, also it heeleth jalousie,
For though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Lat maken with this water his potage,
And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,
Though he the soothe of hir defauté wiste,— 370
Al had she taken preestes two or thre.
Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se ;
He that his hand wol putte in this mitayn,
He shal have multipliyn of his grayn,
Whan he hath sowén, be it whete or otes, 375
So that he offré pens, or ellés grotes.

“ ‘Goode men and wommen, o thyng warne I
yow,
If any wight be in this chirché now
That hath doon synné horrible that he
Dar nat for shame of it y-shryven be, 380
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbonde cokéwold,
Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace
To offren to my relikes in this place ;
And whoso fyndeth hym out of swich fame 385
They wol come up and offre on Goddés name,
And I assoille hem by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me.’

“ By this gaude have I wonné, yeer by yeer,

377. *Goode*, H⁴ *And*.

382. *y-maad*, E² *y-maked*.

385. *fame*, H *blame*.

388. *y-graunted*, etc., H³ *was*
i-graunted me.

389. *yeer by*, H⁴ *every*.

An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner. 390
 I stondé lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
 And whan the lewéd peple is doun y-set,
 I preché so as ye han herd bifoore,
 And telle an hundred falsé japès moore ;
 'Thanne peyne I me to strecché forth the nekke,
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke, 396
 As dooth a dowvé, sittynge on a berne ;
 Myne handès and my tongè goon so yerne,
 That it is joye to se my bisynesse.
 Of avarice and of swich cursednesse 400
 Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free
 To geven hir pens, and namely unto me ;
 For myn entente is nat but for to wynne,
 And no thyng for correccioun of synne.
 I rekké nevere whan that they been beryed, 405
 Though that hir soulès goon a blakèberied ;
 For certès many a predicacioun
 Comth ofté tyme of yvel entencioun ;
 Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
 To been avauncéd by ypocrisye ; 410
 And som for veyné glorie, and som for hate,
 For whan I dar noon oother weyes debate,
 'Thanne wol I styngé hym with my tongè smerte
 In prechyng, so that he shal nat asterte
 To been defaméd falsly, if that he 415
 Hath trespassed to my bretheren or to me ;

395. *the*, H⁴ *my*.397. *berne*, barn.398. *yerne*, readily.402. *pens*, pence.405. *that*, om. EH, H reading *i-beried*.406. *goon a blakeberied*, go black-berrying.414. *asterie*, start away, escape.

For though I tellé noght his propre name,
 Men shal wel knowé that it is the same,
 By signés, and by othere circumstances.
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeances ; 420
 Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe
 Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe.

“ But, shortly, myn entente I wol devyse,—
 I preche of no thyng but for coveityse ;
 Therefore my theme is yet and evere was, 425
Radix malorum est Cupiditas.

~~Thus kan I preche agayn that samé vice~~
~~Which that I use, and that is avarice ;~~
~~But though myself be gilty in that synne~~
~~Yet kan I maken oother folk to twynne 430~~
~~From avarice, and soore to repente ;~~
~~But that is nat my principal entente,—~~
~~I preché no thyng but for coveitise.~~
~~Of this mateere it oghte ynogh suffise.~~

“ Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon 435
 Of oldé stories longé tyme agoon,—
 For lewéd peple loven talés olde,—
 Swiche thyngés kan they wel reporte and holde.
 What ! trowé ye, the whilés I may preche,
 And wynné gold and silver for I teche, 440
 That I wol lyve in povérte wilfully ?
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it nevere, trewely,
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry landes ;
 I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,

424. *for*, H⁵ *of*; H omit-
 ting *of* before *no*.

426. *malorum*, H² *omnium malorum*.
 430. *twynne*, depart from.

Ne maké baskettés and lyve therby, 445
 By cause I wol nat beggen ydelly.
 I wol noon of the Apostles countrefete,
 I wol have moneie, wollé, chese and whete,
 Al were it geven of the povereste page,
 Or of the povereste wydwe in a village, 450
 Al sholde hir children stervé for famyne.
 Nay, I wol drynké licour of the vyne,
 And have a joly wenche in every toun ;
 But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun.
 "Youré likyng is that I shal telle a tale. 455
~~Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,~~
~~By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng~~
~~That shal by resoun been at youre likyng ;~~
~~For though myself be a ful vicious man,~~
~~A moral tale yet I yow tellé kan,~~ 460
~~Which I am went to preche for to wynne.~~
~~Now hoold youre pees, my tale I wol bigynne."~~

PARDONER'S TALE

Heere bigynneth The Pardoners Tale

In Flaundrés whilom was a compaignye
 Of yongé folk, that haunteden folye,
 As riot, hasard, stywés and tavérnes, 465

449. *povereste*, H *prestes*.

Pardoner's Tale: the earliest form of this tale is a Buddhist Birth-Story

in the *Vedabbha Jataka*; analogues exist in Persian, Arabic, etc., and in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, but Chaucer's particular original is unknown.

Where as with harpès, lutès and gyternes,
 They daunce and pleyen at dees, bothe day and
 nyght,

And eten also, and drynken over hir myght,
 Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifice
 Withinne that develes temple, in cursèd wise, 470
 By superfluytee abhomynable.

Hir othès been so grete and so dampnable
 That it is grisly for to heere hem swere ;
 Oure blissèd Lordès body they to-tere ;
 Hem thoughte that Jewès rente hym noght ynough,
 And ech of hem at otheres synné lough ; 476
 And right anon thanne comen tombesteres

Fetys and smale, and yongè frutesteres,
 Syngeres with harpès, baudès, wafereres,
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres, 480
 To kyndle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
 That is annexèd unto glotonye.

The Hooly Writ take I to my witnesse
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkènesse.

Lo, how that dronken Looth unkyndély 485
 Lay by hise doghtrès two unwityngly ;
 So dronke he was he nystè what he wroghte.

Herodès,—who so wel the stories soghte,—
 Whan he of wyn was repleet at his feeste,

467. *pleyen*, H⁴ *pleye*; so in
 next l. *ete* and *drynk*.

474. *Oure blissèd Lordes body*,
 etc., the phrase occurs
 also in the Parson's Tale.

477. *tombesteres*, female tum-
 blers.

478. *Fetys*, neat.

frutesteres, fruit-women.

479. *wafereres*, confectioners.

485. *unkyndely*, unnaturally.

488. *the stories*, i. e. of the birth
 of a Messiah.

Right at his owenè table, he gaf his heeste 490
To sleen the Baptist John, ful giltélees.

Seneca seith a good word, doutelees ;
He seith he kan no differencé fynde
Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde
Ánd a man which that is dronkélewe, 495
But that woodnesse, fallen in a shrewe,
Persévereth lenger than dooth dronkenesse.

O glotonyé, ful of cursednesse ;
O causé first of oure confusioun ;
O original of oure dampnacioun ; 500
Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn !

Ló, how deeré, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilké curséd vileynye ;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye !
Adam oure fader, and his wyf also, 505

Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede,—
For whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys, and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt deffended, on the tree, 510
Anon he was out cast to wo and peyne.

O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne !

O, wiste a man how manye maladyes

492. *Seneca, E⁶ Senec ; Corp.²*
reading *eeek good wordes*
for a good word. Tyr-
whitt traces the refer-
ence to *Ep.* 83.

495. *dronkélewe*, tipsy.

496. *woodnesse*, madness.

501. *us, H⁶ out.*

508. *as I rede*, glossed : Ieroni-
mus contra Iouianum.
"Quamdiu ieiuauit
Adam in Paradiso fuit ;
comedit et eiectus est ;
statim duxit uxorem"
(Bk. ii. cap. 15).
510. *deffended*, forbidden.

Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
 He woldé been the mooré mesurable 515
 Of his dieté, sittinge at his table !
 Allas ! the shorté throte, the tendré mouth,
 Maketh that est and west, and north and south,
 In erthe, in eir, in water, man to swynke
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drynke ! 520
 Of this matiere, O Paul, wel kanstow trete !
 "Mete unto wombe, and wombe eek unto mete,
 Shal God destroyen bothe," as Paulus seith.
 Allas ! a foul thyng is it, by my feith,
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede 525
 Whan man so drynketh of the white and rede,
 That of his throte he maketh his pryvee,
 Thurgh thilké cursed superfluitee.
 The Apostel wepyng seith ful pitously, 529
 "Ther walken manye of whiche yow toold have I,
 I seye it now wepyng with pitous voys,
 That they been enemys of Cristés croys,
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is hir god."
 O wombe ! O bely ! O stynkyng is thi cod !
 Fulfilled of donge and of corrupcioun ! 535
 At either ende of thee foul is the soun ;
 How greet labóur and cost is thee to fynde !
 Thise cookés, how they stampe, and streyne, and
 grynde,
 And turnen substaunce into accident,

520. *a glotoun deyntee mete*, H *a sely glotoun*; H⁴ om. *deyntee*.

534. *is thi*, om. E⁸.

539. *turnen substaunce into ac-*

cident, alter the whole character of. Chaucer is imitating the chapter *De Gula* in the *De Cont. Mundi* of Innocent III.

To fulfillen al thy likerous talent ! 540
 Out of the hardé bonés knokké they
 The mary, for they casté noght away
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote.
 Of spicerie, of leef, and bark, and roote,
 Shal been his sauce y-makéd by delit, 545
 To make hym yet a newer appetit ;
 But certès he that haunteth swiche delices
 Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices.

A lecherous thyng is wyn, and dronkenesse
 Is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchednesse. 550
 O dronké man ! disfigured is thy face,
 Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
 And thurgh thy dronké nose semeth the soun,
 As though thou seydest ay, "Sampsoun ! Sampsoun !"
 And yet, God woot, Sampsoun drank nevere no wyn.
 Thou fallest as it were a stykéd swyn, 556
 Thy tonge is lost and al thyn honeste cure ;
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
 Of mannés wit and his discrecioun,
 In whom that drynke hath dominacioun ; 560
 He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
 Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede,
 And namely fro the whitè wyn of Lepe,
 That is to selle in Fysshstrete, or in Chepe.

540. *fulfillen*, H⁵ *fulfille*.
likerous talent, lustful de-
 sire.

541. *knokke*, H *gete*.

542. *mary*, marrow.

545. *y-makéd by delit*, H *maad*
to his delyt.

546. *yet a newer*, H *have a*
newe.

563. *Lepe*, near Cadiz.

564. *Fysshstrete*, H *Fleetstreet*.

This wyn of Spaigne crepeth subtilly 565
 In othere wynés growynge fasté by,
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtés thre,
 And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
 He is in Spaigne right at the toun of Lepe,— 570
 Nat at the Rochele, ne at Burdeux-toun,—
 And thanné wol he seye, “Sampsoun, Samp-
 soun!”

But herkneth, lordyngs, o word, I yow preye,
 That alle the sovereyn actés, dar I seye,
 Of victories in the Oldé Testament, 575
 Thurgh verray God that is omnipotent,
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
 Looketh the Bible and ther ye may it leere.

Looke, Attila, the greté conquerour,
 Deyde in his sleepe, with shame and dishonour 580
 Bledynge ay at his nose in dronkenesse.
 A capitayn sholde lyve in sobrenesse;
 And over al this avyseth yow right wel
 What was comaunded unto Lamuel,—
 Nat Samuel, but Lamuel seye I; 585
 Redeth the Bible, and fynde it expresly
 Of wyn gevyng to hem that han justise.
 Namooore of this, for it may wel suffise.

And now that I have spoken of glotonye,

567. *fumositee*, headiness.

572. *he*, H⁴ *thai*.

573. *lordyngs*, E *lordes*.

583. *avyseth*, H⁴ *avyse*.

584. *Lamuel*, the mysterious
king of Prov. xxxi. 1.

586. *fynde*, H⁴ *fyndeth*.

589. *that*, om. EH; H reading
i-spoke for *spoken*.

Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.

Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,

And of deceite, and curséd forswerynges,

Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughter, and wast also

Of catel, and of tyme, and forthermo

It is repreeve and contrarie of honour

595

For to ben holde a commune hasardour ;

And ever the hyer he is of estaat,

The mooré is he holden desolaat.

If that a pryncé useth hasardrye

In allé governaunce and policye,

600

He is, as by commune opinioun,

Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,

Was sent to Corynthe in ful greet honour

Fro Lacidomye to maken hire alliaunce ;

605

And whan he cam, hym happedé *par chaunce*,

That alle the gretteste that were of that lond

Pléyynge atté hasard he hem fond ;

For which, as sooné as it myghté be,

He stal hym hoom agayn to his contree,

610

And seyde, "Ther wol I nat lese my name,

Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,

Yow for to allie unto none hasardours ;

Sendeth othere wise embassadours,

590. *deffenden hasardrye*, forbid gambling.

595. *of*, H^b *to*.

603. *Stilbon*, the story is told in the *Polycraticus* (Bk. i. cap. v.) of John of

Salisbury ; the ambassador's name there being given as Chilon.

603. *was*, H^d *was i-holde, was holde*.

605. *maken*, H^b *make*.

For, by my trouthe, me were levere dye,
 Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye ;
 For ye that been so glorious in honours,
 Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours,
 As by my wyl, ne as by my treetee !”
 This wise philosophre thus seyde hee. 615 620

Looke eek that to the kyng Demetrius,
 The kyng of Parthes, as the book seith us,
 Sente him a paire of dees of gold, in scorn,
 For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn ;
 For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun 625
 At no value or reputacioun.

Lordes may fynden oother maner pley
 Honeste ynough to dryve the day away.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
 A word or two, as olde bookes trete. 630
Gret sweryng is a thyng abhominable,
And fals sweryng is yet moore reprevable.
The helghe God forbad sweryng at al,—
 Witnesse on Mathew, but in special
 Of sweryng seith the hooly Jeremye, 635
 “Thou shalt seye sooth thyne othes, and nat
 lye

And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisesse ;”
 But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse.
 Bihoold and se, that in the firste table
 Of heighe Goddes heestés, honourable, 640

621. *to*, om. EH².

Demetrius, this story also
 is from the *Polycraticus*.

630. *olde bookes trete*, H⁴ *other
 bookes entrete*.

637. *doom*, judgment.

Hou that the seconde heeste of hym is this :
 "Take nat my name in ydel, or amys ;"
 Lo, rather he forbedeth swich sweryng
 Than homycide, or many a curséd thyng ;
 I seye that as by ordre thus it stondeth. 645
 This known, that hise heestés understondeth,
 How that the seconde heeste of God is that ;
 And forther over, I wol thee telle, al plat,
 That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous
 That of hise othes is to outrageous,— 650
 "By Goddès precious herte," and "By his nayles,"
 And "By the blood of Crist that is in Hayles,"
 "Sevene is my chaunce, and thyn is cynk and
 treye,
 By Goddès armès, if thou falsly pleye,
 This daggere shal thurghout thyn herté go !" 655
 This fruyt cometh of the bicchéd bonés two,
 Forsweryng, iré, falsnesse, homycide.
 Now for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
 Leté youre othés, bothé grete and smale.
 But, sires, now wol I tellé forth my tale. 660
 Thise riotourés thre, of whiche I telle,

641. *the seconde heeste*, by the Roman Church the first and second commandments are regarded as one, and the tenth divided into two.

642. *ydel or*, Corp.³ *ydelnesse*, a reading pointed to in the *Take not in ydel ne his name amys* of H.

644. *many a*, E *any*, Corp.³ *any other*.

648. *forther over*, H³ *forthmore*.

650. *to*, om. H, Corp.³ *so*.

652. *Hayles*, Hailes Abbey in Gloucestershire.

656. *bicchéd*, probably equivalent to 'curséd.'

659. *Leté*, H⁵ *Leveth*.

661. *riotourés*, EH⁴ *riotours*.

Longe erst er primé rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a taverné to drynke ;
 And as they sat they herde a bellé clynke
~~Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave.~~ 665

~~That oon of hem gan callen to his knave :~~
 "Go bet," quod he, "and axé redily—
~~What cors is this that passeth heer forby,~~
 And looke that thou reporte his namé weel."

"Sire," quod this boy, "it nedeth néveradeel,
 It was me toold er ye cam heere two houres ; 671

He was, *pardee*, an old felawe of youre,
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-nyght,
~~For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright ;~~
 Ther cam a privee theef, ~~men clepeth Deeth,~~ 675

~~That in this contree al the peplé sleeth,~~
 And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
 And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence,
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence, 680
 Me thynketh that it weré necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie ;
 Beth redy for to meete hym everemoore ;
 Thus taughté me my dame ; I sey namoore."

"By Seinte Marié !" seyde this taverner, 685
 "The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer
 Henne over a mile, withinne a greet village,
 Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, and page ;

663. *to*, H⁴ *for to*.

667. *Go bet*, go quickly.

669. *that*, om. H.

675. *clepeth*, H⁴ *clepen*.

681. *were*, H *is ful*.

688. *hyne*, servant.

I trowe his habitacioun be there ;
 To been avyséd greet wysdom it were, 690
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour."

"Ye, Goddés armés !" quod this riotour,
 "Is it swich peril with hym for to meete ?
~~I shal hym seke by wey, and eek by strete ;~~
 I make avow to Goddés digné bones ! 695
 Herkneth, felawés, we thre been al ones,
~~Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,~~
~~And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,~~
 And we wol sleen this falsé traytour, Deeth ;
~~He shal be slayn, he that so manye sleeth,~~ 700
 By Goddés dignitee, er it be nyght !"

Togidres han thise thre hir trouthés plight
 To lyve and dyen ech of hem with oother,
 As though he were his owene y-boré brother ;
 And up they stirte, al dronken in this rage ; 705
 And forth they goon towardés that village
 Of which the taverner hadde spoke biforn ;
 And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn ;
 And Cristés blessed body they to-rente,—
 Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym hente. 710

Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile,
 Right as they wolde han troden over a stile,
 An oold man and a pouré with hem mette ;
 This oldé man ful mekély hem grette,
 And seyde thus : "Now, lordés, God yow see !" 715

700. *he* (2), E *which*, om. H.

703. *with*, E *for*, Corp. *to*.

704. *y-bore*, E² *y-born*, *bore*,
 born ; H² *sworne*.

709. *to-rente*, *tear in pieces*.

712. *troden*, H *torned*.

715. *Now*, *lordes*, H *Lord-*
 ynges.

The proudeste of thise riotours three
 Answerde agayn, "What, carl with sory grace,
 Why artow al for-wrappéd, save thy face?
 Why lyvestow so longe, in so greet age?"

This oldé man gan looke in his visage, 720

And seyde thus: "For I ne kan nat fynde
A man, though that I walkéd into Ynde,
Neither in citee, ne in no village,
That woldé chaunge his youthé for myn age;

And therfore moot I han myn agé stille, 725

As longé tyme as it is Goddés wille.

Ne Deeth, alas! ne wol nat han my lyf;

Thus walke I, lyk a restélees kaityf,

And on the ground, which is my moodrés gate,

I knokké with my staf erly and late, 730

And seyè, 'Leevè mooder, leet me in!

~~Lo, how I vanysshe, flessch and blood and skyn;~~

Allas! whan shul my bonés been at reste?

Mooder, with yow wolde I chaungé my cheste

That in my chambré longé tyme hath be, 735

Ye, for an heyre-clowt to wrappé me!'

But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,

For which ful pale and welkéd is my face;

But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye

To speken to an old man vileynye, 740

But he trespasse in word, or elles in dede.

In Hooly Writ ye may your self wel rede,

716. riotours, E² riotours.

717. sory (Corp.² harde) grace,
 H meschaunce!

723. ne, E nor.

730. erly, E² bothe erly.

732. vanysshe, H² wane.

Agayns an oold man, hoor upon his heed,
 Ye sholde arise ; wherfore I geve yow reed,
 Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now, 745
 Namooóre than ye wolde men did to yow
 In agé, if that ye so longe abyde.
 And God be with yow, where ye go or ryde ;
 I moote go thider as I have to go."

"Nay, oldé cherl, by God, thou shalt nat
 so !"

Seydè this oother hasardour anon ; 751
 "Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John !
 Thou spak right now of thilké traytour, Deeth,
 That in this contree alle oure freendès sleeth ;
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye, 755
 Telle where he is, or thou shalt it abyé,
By God and by the hooly sacrament !
 For soothly, thou art oon of his assent
 To sleen us yongé folk, thou falsé theef !"

"Now, sires," quod he, "if that ye be so leef 760
 To fyndé Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,
Under a tree, and there he wole abyde ;
 Noght for youre boost he wole him no thyng hyde.
 Se ye that ook ? Right there ye shal hym fynde. 765
 God savé yow that boghte agayn mankynde,
 And yow amende !" thus seyde this oldé man ;

743. *Agayns*, i.e. in the presence of.

744. *geve*, om. H.

745. *noon harm*, H *more harm*,
 Pet. *harm as*.

746. *than*, E² *than that*.

747. *ye*, H *ye may*.

756. *or thou shalt it abyde* (pay
 for), H² *or elles thou
 schalt dye*.

And evêrich of thise riotourés ran
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde,
 Of floryns fyne, of gold y-coynéd rounde, 770
 Wel ny a seven bussshels, as hem thoughte.
 No lenger thanné after Deeth they soughte,
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
 For that the floryns been so faire and brighte,
 That down they sette hem by this precious hoord.
 The worste of hem he spak the firsté word. 776
 "Bretheren," quod he, "taak kepé what I seye;
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.
 This tresor hath Fortúne unto us geven
 In myrthe and joliftee oure lyf to lyven, 780
 And lightly as it comth so wol we spende.
 Ey, Goddés precious dignitee! who wende
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
 But myghte this gold be caried fro this place
 Hoom to myn hous, or ellés unto youres,— 785
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures,—
 Thanne weré we in heigh felicitée.
 But trewely, by daye it may nat bee;
 Men woldé seyn that we were thevés stronge,
 And for oure owené tresor doon us honge. 790
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nyghte
 As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.

768. *riotours*, E⁴ *riotours*.771. *a seven*, E³ *an viii*.776. *worste*, H *yongest*, omitting *he*.777. *seye*, H *schal seye*.778. *bourde*, *jest*.786. H *For wel I woot that this gold is nought oures, Corp. thanne mighte we saye that it were al oures.*

Wherefore, I rede that cut among us alle
 Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle ;
 And he that hath the cut with herte blithe 795
 Shal renne to the towne, and that ful swithe,
 And brynge us breed and wyn ful prively,
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly
 This tresor wel ; and if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is nyght we wol this tresor carie, 800
 By oon assent, where as us thynketh best."
 That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,
 And bad hem drawe and looke where it wol falle ;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon ; 805
 And al so sooné as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother :
 "Thow knowest wel thou art my sworné brother ;
 Thy profit wol I tellé thee anon ;
 Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon, 810
 And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departéd been among us thre ;
 But nathélees, if I kan shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendés torn to thee ?" 815
 That oother answerde, "I noot hou that may be ;
 He woot how that the gold is with us tweye ;
 What shal we doon, what shal we to hym seye ?"

793. *cut*, *lot*.796. *the*, om. E⁵.*swithe*, quickly.801. *thynketh*, H *liketh*.802. *fest*, *fist*.803. *hem*, E *hym*.807. *of hem*, om. E.808. *knowest wel*, H⁴ *wost wel*
that.

"Shal it be conseil?" seyde the firste shrewe,
 "And I shal tellen in a wordes fewe 820
 What we shal doon, and bryngen it wel aboute."

"I graunte," quod that oother, "out of doute,
 That by my trouthe I shal thee nat biwreye."

"Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel we be
 tweye,

And two of us shul strenger be than oon. 825
 Looke, whan that he is set, and right anoon
 Arys, as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
 And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye,
 Whil that thou strogelest with hym as in game,
 And with thy daggere looke thou do the same ; 830
 And thanne shal al this gold departed be,
 My deeré freend, bitwixen me and thee.
 Thanne may we bothe oure lustés all fulfille,
 And pleye at dees right at oure owene wille."
 And thus acorded been thise shrewés tweye, 835
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongeste, which that wente unto the
 toun,

Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of thise floryns newe and brighte ;
 "O Lord," quod he, "if so were that I myghte 840
 Have al this tresor to my self allone,
 Ther is no man that lyveth under the trone
 Of God, that sholdé lyve so murye as I!"

821. *bryngen*, H⁶ *bringe*.

823. *shal*, H⁶ *wil*, *nyl*.

826. *and*, E² *that*.

835. *shrewes*, *rascals*.

838. *ofte*, H *fast*.

841. *tresor to*, H *gold unto*.

And atté laste the feend, oure enemy, 844
 Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson beye,
 With which he myghté sleen hise felawes tweye ;
 For why? The feend foond hym in swich lyvynges,
 That he hadde levé hym to sorwé brynge,
 For this was outrély his fulle entente
 To sleen hem bothe and nevere to repente. 850
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
 Into the toun, unto a pothecarie,
 And preydè hym that he hym woldé selle
 Som poyoun, that he myghte hise rattés quelle ;
 And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe, 855
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
 And fayn he woldé wreke hym, if he myghte,
 On vermyn, that destroyed hym by nyghte.

The pothecarie answerde, "And thou shalt have
 A thyng that, al so God my soulé save ! 860
 In al this world ther nis no créature,
 That eten or dronken hath of this confiture,
 Noght but the montance of a corn of whete,
 That he ne shal his lif anon forlete ;
 Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lassé while 865
 Than thou wolt goon a-paas nat but a mile,
 This poyoun is so strong and violent."

This curséd man hath in his hond y-hent
 This poyoun in a box, and sith he ran

848. *hym*, E² *hem*.

849. *outrély*, utterly ; H *wit-terly*, surely.

855. *hawe*, hedge.

857. *fayn*, H⁴ repeat *said*.

862. *eten or dronken*, H³ *ete or dronke*.

863. *montance*, amount.

864. *forlete*, forgo.

865. *sterve*, die.

Into the nexté strete unto a man, 870
 And borwéd hym largé botellés thre,
 And in the two his poyson pouréd he ;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his owené drynke,
 For al the nyght he shoope hym for to swynke
 In cariynge of the gold out of that place ; 875
 And whan this riotour with sory grace
 Hadde filled with wyn his greté botels thre,
 To hise felawes agayn repaireth he.

What nedeth it to sermone of it moore ?
 For right as they hadde cast his deeth biſoore, 880
 Right so they han hym slayn, and that anon,
 And whan that this was doon thus spak that oon :
 " Now lat us sitte and drynke, and make us merie,
 And afterward we wol his body berie ;"
 And with that word it happéd hym, *par cas*, 885
 To take the botel ther the poysoun was,
 And drank and gaf his felawe drynke also,
 For which anon they storven bothé two.

But certés, I suppose that Avycen
 Wroot nevere in no Canon, ne in no fen, 890
 Mo wonder signés of empoisonyng
 Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir endyng.
 Thus ended been thise homycidés two,
 And eek the false empoysonere also.

O curséd synne of allé cursednesse ! 895

871. *botelles*, EH⁴ *botels*.

874. *shoope hym*, determined.

880. *as*, E *so as*.

890. *fen*, the Arabic name of

the sections of Avicenna's Canon.

891. *signes*, H⁴ *sorwes*.

895. *of alle*, H³ *ful of*.

O traytorous homycide ! O wikkednesse !
 O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye !
 Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileynye,
 And othès grete, of usage and of pride !
 Allas ! mankyndé, how may it bitide 900
 That to thy Creätour which that the wroghte,
 And with his precious herté-blood thee boghte,
 Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas !

Now, goode men, God forgeve yow youre trespas,
 And ware yow fro the synne of avarice. 905
 Myn hooly pardoun may yow alle warice,
~~So that ye offre nobles, or sterlynges,~~
 Or ellés silver broches, spoones, rynges.
 Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle !
~~Cometh up, ye wyvès, offreth of youre wolle !~~ 910
 Your names I entre heer in my rolle anon ;
 Into the blisse of hevene shul ye gon ;
 I yow assoillé by myn heigh power,—
 Yow that wol offre,—as clene and eek as cleer
 As ye were born ; and lo, sires, thus I preche, 915
 And Jhesu Crist, that is oure soulès leche,
 So graunté yow his pardoun to receyve,
 For that is best, I wol yow nat deceyve.

“ But, sires, o word forgot I in my tale ;
 I have relikes and pardoun in my male ” 920

896. *traytorous*, E⁵ *traytours*.906. *warice*, heal.907. *sterlynges*, sterling pennies.910. *Cometh*, E *Com*.*wolle*, wool.920. *male*, wallet.

As faire as any man in Engeland,
 Whiche were me geven by the popes hond.
 If any of yow wole of devocioun
 Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
 Com forth anon, and kneleth heere adoun, . 925

And mekely receyveth my pardoun;
 Or ellës taketh pardoun as ye wende,
 Al newe and fressh at every milës ende,—
 So that ye offren, alwey newe and newe, 929
 Nobles or pens, whiche that be goode and trowe.

It is an honour to everich that is heer
~~That ye mowe have a suffisant Pardoneer~~
~~Tassoillë yow in contree as ye ryde,~~
~~For aventüres whiche that may bityde.~~
 Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two 935

Doun of his hors and breke his nekke atwo ;
 Looke which a seuretee is it to yow alle,
 That I am in youre felaweshipe y-falle,
 That may assoillë yow, bothe moore and lasse,
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe. 940

I redë that oure Hoost heere shal bigynne,
 For he is moost enveloped in synne !
 Com forth, sire Hoost, and offrë first anon,
 And thou shalt kisse my relikes everychon,—
 Ye, for a grote ! Unbokele anon thy purs." 945

"Nay, nay," quod he, "thanne have I Cristës
 curs !

Lat be," quod he, "it shal nat be, so theeche ;
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn oldë breech,

935. *fallen*, H⁶ *falle*.

947. *theech*, thee ich, thrive I.

And swere it were a relyk of a seint,
 Though it were with thy fundement depeint ; 950
 But, by the croys which that Seint Eleyne fond,
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
 Inside of relikes, or of seintuarie.

Lat kutte hem of, I wol with thee hem carie,
They shul be shryned in an hogges toord." 955

This Pardoner answerde nat a word ;
 So wrooth he was no word ne wolde he seye.

"Now," quodoure Hoost, "I wol no lenger
pleye

With thee, ne with noon oother angry man."
 But right anon the worthy Knyght bigan,— 960
 Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,—

"Namoore of this, for it is right ynough !
Sire Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere ;
And ye, sir Hoost, that been to me so deere,
 I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner ; 965
 And Pardoner, I prey thee drawe thee neer,
And as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye."
Anon they kiste and ryden forth hir weye.

951. *Eleyne*, Helena.

966. *thee*, H² *yow*.

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